

MARITIME MEMORIES

By Spurgeon G. "Spud" Roscoe VE1BC

Dedicated to the memory of "Cora A. Roscoe" Spud's Mother



This is Cora A. Roscoe with her three son's. S. G. "Spud" sitting next to her. R. J. "Dick" with the beard and K. C. "Ken"

Note Back about 1975 I decided to try and learn what I could of the history of marine communications as it applied to the Halifax, Nova Scotia area, especially that connected with and around station VCS.

A few people told me that if I wrote a book on this history it would pay for my research. I wasted a lot of time, effort and money on this project. I contacted every publisher I could find and have yet to find one who would publish this history. There is very little interest in the subject.

The research and writing of this history has become a hobby of mine. When I retired in 1995 the Canadian Coast Guard took a copy of what I had at that time and used it to help create the book "Come Quick, Danger" by Stephan Dubreuil. ISBN 0-660-17490-1.

I have collected a lot of photographs of this history and some were used in this book and some will be found around this website.

I still rewrite or add to this project for my own enjoyment. When I learn something of interest I simply include it here. If you read the whole thing you will be one of very few who have done so.

S. G. Roscoe VE1BC

RADIO STATIONS COMMON? NOT THIS KIND!

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A BIT ON THE BEGINNING.

When you seriously try to imagine what life will be like for our grandchildren, it is just as impossible as to imagine what life was really like for our grandparents. Very few a hundred years and more ago could either read or write. The few medieval men who could were very inefficient. When great grandfather, twelve generations and more ago, bolted himself inside his armour and went clinking, clanking and squeaking about the countryside, there was nothing to be gained by painting his name on his armour if he were capable of doing so. Very few if any of those he met, most similarly attired, would be capable of reading and knowing who was bolted inside.

During that period they overcame this problem by using Heraldic Shields known as Family Arms. It was customary for a family to earn these family arms by a member doing an outstanding deed for society. Usually this deed involved some type of heroism during a war. The English and French were continuously, as it appears, at each other's back yard in a skirmish of one kind or another. My forefathers were awarded these family arms through these skirmishes.



The Roscoe family arms from York Insignia, Goodramsgate, England.



This is the West Family Arms from York Insignia, Goodramsgate, England.

It is rather obvious that ships, such as they were years ago, were not much concerned with a means of communication. Other than a few basic signals, normally by some flag or another, often the position of the national ensign or flag of the country that owned the vessel was sufficient.

There was no Navy when the first of these small ships started visiting this the North American continent, these first ships were rigged as much for self-protection as for general transportation. During any events of war, any and all ships, which were needed to fight this war were rounded up and used by the various armies involved. In the few battles, which took place on the sea the ships used, were in the form of floating platforms for hand to hand combat. Gunnery had not been advanced far enough for them to do much if any damage from a distance from each other. Some of the rigging was designed or altered for this purpose. The yard tips were fitted with iron hooks in order for the ship to hook into the rigging of any foe and thereby remain locked to it in order to assist the hand to hand combat which would take place on the decks below. For this reason these vessels were fitted with the higher forward and after castles on these earliest ships, which was an Army design rather than a marine feature.

The world did not have the population that it does today and therefore there were not nearly as many ships as there are now. For example during the time of the Spanish Armada in 1588 England had only 135 merchant ships. These ships were very small, some were as large as 400 tons and a few were as large as 500 tons. Other than a very few special flags or pennants, the only flag or means of communication by these ships was the flag of England, a white flag with a red cross known as the St. George's Cross which is the flag of England to this day.

The National Flag first appeared as a carryover from the Crusades in Europe. The word Crusade originated from the term carriers of the cross. These Crusaders had their armour, banners, and so on emblazoned with various forms of the cross. The St. George's cross can also be called the Greek cross. The Greek cross is the same, except it has four equal sides and once this is transferred to a rectangular flag, the more common form of a National Flag, these four sides or bars of the cross, are no longer equal.

Possibly the oldest flag is that of Denmark which became their national flag in 1219 and is a white cross on red. All the Scandinavian countries use a cross as their national flag. Norway: blue with a white border cross on red. Finland: blue cross on white. Sweden: yellow cross on blue. Iceland: red with white border cross on blue. There are several more countries that use the cross as the National Flag. Switzerland uses a white Greek cross on red and the Red Cross Society (in most countries) uses the reverse of this flag; a red cross on a white flag. The Union Flag of Great Britain is often called the Union Jack. It is a combination of three flags using crosses. The St. Georges Cross of England, the St. Andrews Cross of Scotland and the St. Patricks Cross for Ireland.



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The Union Flag of Great Britain

This flag is also used in the canton of many other flags, the flags of areas that had close ties with Great Britain at one time. The province of Ontario and Manitoba are but two examples. The province of British Columbia uses it as the top half of its flag. Even the state of Hawaii in the United States of America, has it as the canton of its flag. These are but a few of the many flags using this Union Flag. The province of Newfoundland had the Union Flag as their official flag from 1931 until May 28th, 1980.

It should be mentioned that a Jack is the correct term for the flag flown on the bow of a ship. This is flown from a Jack Staff a small pole fixed to the bow of a ship and is normally flown only while the ship is in port. British ships use the Union Flag as their Jack and this is the reason the Union Flag is more often called the Union Jack rather than by its correct term – Union Flag.

The current Canadian Naval Ships, the ones with the prefix HMCS use the Canadian Navy Jack. This is a white flag with the Canadian Red Maple Leaf and Bars Flag as the canton defaced with the badge of the Canadian Forces Maritime Command on the fly.



Flags of the World
The Canadian Navy Jack

United States Naval Ships use the canton of the United States Flag as their Jack, a blue flag with fifty white stars, one star for each state in the union.

The first feeble attempts at designing any means of communications between ships at sea took place during the English Dutch Wars, which were the first major wars to take place mostly on the seas. These battles were fought during the mid-sixteen hundreds.

When great (nine times) Grandfather Francis West and his brothers became part of the Virginia Company of London, which was often called the London Company, they purchased three ships. This Company was chartered by King James I for colonization purposes in 1606, and was the one to establish the first English settlement in the New World of North America in what is now the state of Virginia.

The three vessels purchased for their transportation needs were named SUSAN CONSTANT, GODSPEED, and DISCOVERY. Hardly the type of vessel you or I would consider sailing anywhere, let alone use to make several trips across the Atlantic Ocean. But at that date and time, they were the best available and as far as is known SUSAN CONSTANT and GODSPEED had been in service transporting coal around the English coast for the Muscovy Company. DISCOVERY had been specially built for service in the New World. At least she remained on station in Virginia for exploratory purposes and did not return to England. The other two did return and SUSAN CONSTANT is believed to have made as many as seven trips back and forth between this new colony and England. Great grandfather it seems made a number of these trips. Francis West is referred to as Captain Francis West in several places. This title was along the lines of an Army Captain and not a Sea Captain. He was Governor of Virginia for a two-year period. The Captain's of the three ships were: SUSAN CONSTANT, Captain Christopher Newport, who was also the fleet Commander; GODSPEED, Captain Bartholomew Gosnold; DISCOVERY, Captain John Ratcliffe.

These three ships were and are good examples of the type of ship in use at that time. They were much the same as the French were using to settle their colonies at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, in 1604, and Quebec in 1608. DISCOVERY being the smallest at only 20 tons – 49 feet long, would put her in about the same size category as a small inland-fishing vessel of today. SUSAN CONSTANT at 100 tons and 111 feet long and GODSPEED at 40 tons and 68 feet long make them larger, but definitely not large enough to be called deep-sea ships in today's terminology.

We are very fortunate to have replicas of these three ships available in order to give us some idea of what the actual ships were really like. The replicas were built for the sole purpose of being on display at the Jamestown Festival site. Both the river and town were named for King James I.

There was a replica of SUSAN CONSTANT built in 1991. This replica replaced the one built in 1957. My photographs are of the one built in 1957.



Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation

This is the SUSAN CONSTANT, GODSPEED and DISCOVERY from left to right.

These three ships were constructed from extensive research provided by various people and organizations. This design encompasses all the ships of that period, including MAYFLOWER, which landed the first Pilgrims at the present area of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1620. There is a replica of this vessel located at this site in Plymouth, Massachusetts. This replica was built in England and given to the United States by the British. She sailed over in 1957.

Another replica worthy of mentioning was the HALF MOON. This replica was constructed during the first decade of this century and based in the New York City area. Henry Hudson used the original vessel, HALVE MAEN (HALF MOON), in 1611 to explore the eastern United States as it is known today and more explicitly the river named for Hudson in the area of the present state of New York. The replica of this vessel ran into some difficulty. This HALF MOON replica had gravel or fairly small sized stones in it for ballast. Over a period of time a good many of those who visited the replica pinched a stone or two to keep as a souvenir of the visit. No doubt the publicity surrounding the vessel left many with the impression that it was the actual vessel that had been recently found stored away in some hidden spot for 300 years. The end result of all this was that after a period of time, it was decided to take a number of people on a sight seeing cruise in the vessel. During this cruise something took place that caused these passengers to become excited and all rush to one side of the vessel. Having lost a good deal of her ballast to souvenir hunters, this sudden rush to one side and corresponding shift in weight distribution, caused the replica of HALF MOON to capsize drowning some of her passengers.

Since this unfortunate incident the United States Coast Guard had to step in and place certain restrictions on these replicas. This restriction placed on SUSAN CONSTANT, GODSPEED, and DISCOVERY is in the form of poured cement for ballast. This cement, of course, hardened and made it impossible for anyone to remove any of it. It was also of sufficient amount to make it impossible for as many people as could possibly be carried in either of the vessels to rush to one side and cause a shift in the vessels stability.

There was another replica of the HALF MOON built at Albany, New York, in 1989.

But I am getting away from trying to explain the communication and navigation aids carried by these first ships to visit this continent. In addition to the magnetic compasses carried in these vessels, they probably carried an astrolabe, a sea ring or circle, the fore-staff or cross-staff, a backstaff and a pegged traverse board. In order to explain the operation of these primitive

instruments, one must quote the literature provided by the Jamestown Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, which is taken from their correspondence as follows:

"The transatlantic navigation of ships in the beginning of the 17th century was hazardous and uncertain. The instruments available were simple and highly inaccurate. Maps were rare, and those available were vague and usually greatly distorted. An air of mystery surrounded knowledge of navigational routes; fishermen and navigators tended to foster secrecy concerning such matters. Nations vying for control of various parts of the New World suppressed all information which might benefit their competitors.

It is highly probable that the three ships, SUSAN CONSTANT, GODSPEED, and DISCOVERY, were supplied with some form of map, such as the portolan. This was a coastal chart conceived by seafaring men and based strictly on experience with the local scene, in contrast to the general maps of the world as a whole, and of countries and provinces, which were projected academically and geometrically for the use of a small group of scholars.

The traditional date of the "invention" of the mariner's compass is 1602. In 1607 the "strange behavior" of varying declination of the compass was still not thoroughly understood, though it was accepted without fear. In 1492, Columbus had difficulty suppressing mutiny in his superstitious crew who were greatly distressed when their compasses began acting erratically.

Aboard ship it was commonly a three-man job to take a sight with the astrolabe, regardless of the size or weight of the instrument. One man held the instrument by a ring passed over his thumb, while he stood with his back braced against the mast; the second man took sight, measuring the altitude of the sun or star, and the third man read off.

The mariner's astrolabe was hung by a ring so that it could turn with the motion of the ship, but it was made heavy (the bottom part often thicker than the top, and sometimes a weight of six or seven pounds was hung to the instrument) to "keep a perpendicular situation during the motion of the ship."

The flat surface or face of the circle was divided into four quarters; one, two, or all of the quarters were divided into 90 degrees, and very often into halves and fourths of degrees. A pointer (also called a rule or index) with holes bored through the sights, was adjusted so that the rays of the sun or star passed through its holes. The number of degrees then shown to be between the extremity of the pointer and the horizon line showed the altitude of the sun or star above the horizon (the zenith distance).

The sea ring or circle was used for measuring the altitude of the sun above the horizon.

The fore-staff or cross-staff was used to take the altitude of the sun or stars, or the distance of two stars. This instrument consists of a straight, square, graduated staff and four crosses or vanes which slide stiffly thereon. The four sides of the staff have different, graduated scales, each used with one of the four vanes.

The fore-staff was fitted with three peephole sights in the form of plates; one at either end of the vane and one on the near end of the staff, which served as the eyepiece. The obvious defect of both the fore-staff and the astrolabe was that the observer had to look directly into the sun.

The pegged traverse board was a crude instrument, probably made by the ship's carpenter or by someone who could use a few tools, and there was no standard size. They were apparently used by the steersman to keep a record (rather rough) of the directions and speeds of the ship during his four-hour watch. The account would then be written into the ship's log."

This gives an excellent description of the navigational aids used in sailing these early ships across the Atlantic and as for communications they were limited to that of visual flags or the like,

and the audible sound of a gun or cannon. All three of these ships as well as all the other ships in operation at that time carried guns or cannon. SUSAN CONSTANT was pierced for eight gun ports, each having a gun capable of being fired. Some pre-arranged audible signal system would be established and maintained during any voyage if it were deemed necessary, although it is more than likely none was set-up. Should one of the ships have strayed out of sight of Captain Newport, he would have fired a shot now and then until the straggler showed up by steering towards the sound of these shots. Quite naturally the inevitable "boom" followed by a string of profane language would have meant a screw-up of some description.

In addition to the audible sounds made by the gun or cannon fire there would have been the visual flag or the like, for signal purposes during the hours of daylight and good visibility. These signals of course would have been prearranged as well. For example, if Captain Newport flew his ensign at the forepeak, at the top of the fore or forward mast, it could have meant most anything. This could have meant that he wanted the other two ships to sail close enough to him for a verbal chat by shouting back and forth from each ship.

It is known that on 12th April, 1606, a Royal Proclamation was made of which the following is an extract:-

"Whereas some difference has arisen between Our subjects of South and North Britain, travelling by seas, about the bearing of their flags: for the avoiding of all such contentions hereafter, We have, with the advice of Our Council, ordered that from henceforth, all Our subjects of the Isle and Kingdom of Great Britain, and the members thereof, shall bear in their maintops the Red Cross, commonly called St. George's Cross, and the White Cross, commonly called the St. Andrew's Cross, joined together, according to a form made by Our Heralds, and sent by Us to Our Admiral, to be published to our said subjects: and in their foretops Our subjects of South Britain shall wear the Red Cross only, as they were wont; and our subjects of North Britain in their foretops the White Cross only, as they were accustomed."

This makes it clear that SUSAN CONSTANT, GODSPEED, DISCOVERY, MAYFLOWER, and all the other British ships of that date and time were so attired. This can be seen in the photographs on these pages.



Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
SUSAN CONSTANT, DISCOVERY and GODSPEED

All of these factors make it very interesting and should help one to understand what one of these original vessels resembled.

Columbus's voyage of 1492 brings to mind a most interesting point concerning human comfort in these early ships. Columbus sailed over in three ships, the NINA, PINTA, and SANTA MARIA, as most school children know. There was only a bunk or two fitted in these three ships for the comfort of a few of the officers. The remainder slept wherever they could find room to lie down. On landing in the New World as Columbus called it, these seamen found the native Indians, the Arawak tribe of the West Indies as it was named by Columbus sleeping in a rig they called a hammacus. These seamen found these hammacus so comfortable they began making them of sail canvas and hanging them on their ships. From the word hammacus these became hammocks and can be found in use to this day. Many of the ships of the Royal Canadian Navy were still using these hammocks when I was in the Navy during the 1950's. I have yet to hear a complaint from one who ever slept in one at sea. Most swear they are the only comfortable means of getting a good sleep at sea because of the motion of the ship. I sailed with one officer who slept in one during the 1970's.

There were very few and minor changes in the ships of Columbus's three-ship fleet, to that of Great grandfather West's three-ship fleet, which spanned a period of just over 100 years. It was to be nearly another 100 years before any really great changes were to take place in ship construction. At this time gunnery had progressed whereby ships were capable of doing some damage to another ship without going alongside the vessel. This meant that there was now a place for an actual Navy rather than just an Army. This fact was to bring about the end of the Castle on a ship. The larger of the earlier ships, like SANTA MARIA, PINTA, SUSAN CONSTANT, GODSPEED, HALF MOON, MAYFLOWER and those of similar size had these castles.

But the greatest change, which improved the sailing capabilities of these ships the most, was the use of what are known as fore and aft sails. These sails were fixed between the masts in a line parallel to the centerline of the ship. Prior to this all sails on the largest ships had been square, in many cases they looked a lot like bed sheets, the upper portion lashed along a yard on the mast with the lower corners seized via lines to points on the ship's deck. These latter fore and aft sails, which were the only sails fitted on most schooners, enabled these ships to sail much closer to the wind. This meant they were able to maintain a course closer to their desired course, when sailing into the wind.

Great grandfather West's DISCOVERY was known as a Pinnace, a term used to describe most any small vessel and was even used to describe certain ships' boats. Columbus's NINA was known as a Caravel which was the term used to describe small fast sailing vessels, normally containing a high poop deck and lateen sails.

Five years after Columbus first discovered the New World England sent out the first of many explorers, John Cabot. In 1497 he explored the current island province of Newfoundland and parts of the current Province of Nova Scotia. This being an English expedition meant that the ship would have flown only the St. George's cross, the flag of England. John Cabot's ship was called the MATTHEW and a replica of this vessel sailed over in the 1990's.

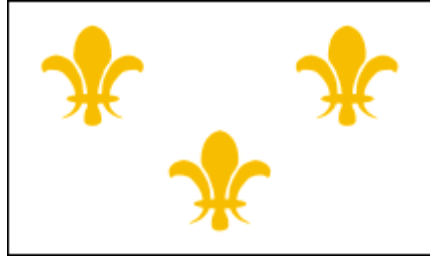
The French were also visiting this area regularly. Their fishermen were regular visitors along the coast of the current island of Newfoundland, province of Nova Scotia, and the New England States back during the 1500's and 1600's prior to their ever attempting to establish settlements in this area and after these settlements were established. Naturally they had their guns and cannons for audible signalling as well as protection. They also could have used any of the various visual flag, lantern, and the like means for signalling. But the only big difference was that they flew a flag emblazoned with three gold fleur-de-lis (flower of the lily) the flag of France which was first used in the 500's, possibly as late as 596 A.D.



John Rae VE1AGN

This drawing is compliments of Marital Inc., the distributors of Japan Radio Company Marine Electronics in the United States.

The present French tri-colour, the red, white and blue vertical bars was not adopted until King Louis XVI used it in 1789. This meant that the French explorers, Champlain with Sieur de Monts and Jacques Cartier, would have flown the flag with the three gold fleur-de-lis and planted this flag on any country they were claiming in the name of France. They claimed what is the current area of eastern Canada.



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This is the first flag flown in the current area of Eastern Canada.

It is worthy of note that Columbus was Italian, also John Cabot who was exploring for England, but Columbus was sailing for the King and Queen of Spain and his ships were therefore Spanish. The Spanish, by nature, enjoy decorating their possessions and their sailing ships were favourite objects. The sails were invariably marked with bright coloured designs and for this reason their ships would stand out visibly from the others. In addition to the markings on the sails, Columbus carried the flag of Spain. This flag combined the arms of Castile and Leon at that time.



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This is the flag of Spain carried by Columbus.

The present red and yellow Spanish flag was not in use until 1785. Columbus also carried his personal flag, a white banner containing a green cross with the letter F and Y on either side of the cross being the predominant markings. F stood for King Ferdinand and the Y for Queen Isabella or Ysabel as the Spanish spelled it.



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The personal flag carried by Columbus.

Columbus made three voyages to the New World and Spain accumulated vast colonies in both what is now known as Central America and north to and including the present state of Florida on the East Coast of North America.

Therefore there was a lot of travel between the old and new worlds during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that involved the flags of a number of nations, England, France, Spain and the Netherlands.

The Dutch founded New York City in 1624. Henry Hudson was a British sea captain. His first two voyages were made for the English Muscovy Company. His third voyage involving the present New York area and accomplished with the HALF MOON was for the Dutch East Indian Company. The HALF MOON flew the Dutch Flag. It was on Henry Hudson's fourth voyage that he explored the present Hudson Bay, named for him, that his crew mutinied and cast him, his son, and seven loyal seamen adrift in a small boat. Hudson, his son, his boat, and these seven seamen were never heard from again. Hudson was sailing for the English again in a ship called the DISCOVERY at the time he was cast adrift. After his successful voyage with the Dutch he had been forbidden to sail for any other country besides England. DISCOVERY was not only a popular name for these ships but most appropriate. The Dutch flag flown by HALF MOON was a flag containing three equal horizontal bars, gold at the top, white in the middle, and royal blue along the bottom and depicted in the middle of the flag and on the white bar only were the initials of the Dutch East India Company as it was spelled in Dutch. About 1630 the Dutch replaced the gold bar on this tri-colour flag with a red bar and this has been their flag, the flag of the Netherlands to this day.



Mark Sensen Flags of the World

Those in charge of these things are not sure what the letters stood for and like so much of this history apparently there were several of these flags in use.

There have been and will always be thousands of flags. It is believed that the first flag flown over North America was the flag of Leif Ericson, a white flag depicting a large bird – a caricature of the Raven. This was flown in the 1000's some 500 years prior to the English, French, Spanish, and Dutch arriving.

Another flag to see extensive use in this area is not a flag in the singular sense. The Pirate Flag the black flag with the white skull and cross bones that we today consider the Pirate Flag was actually the flag of pirate Edward England. Each and every pirate during the colourful or memorable years as we depict pirates and pirating had his own flag. Most were black flags with white skulls, bones, swords, and the like. The hourglass was another favourite symbol depicted on these flags to signify your time has run out. Although black was the favourite colour, other colours or combinations of colours were used, red being another favourite.

It is a pity a written record of my great (six times) Grandfather Thomas West's voyages had not survived, if ever there was one, so that I could record same here. He died at the early age of about forty, in 1728, at Rhode Island, from injuries received in a shipwreck exposure and disease contracted in the West Indies. He had made his home at Tisbury, on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, where he was an inn holder, a mariner, and a pilot.

Great grandfather Thomas West's voyages to the West Indies would have been made during the time of the glorious period of pirating as we tend to depict pirates in general, and any detail on

these voyages would be most interesting. The difference between a pirate and a privateer was very small indeed. In certain areas it is hard to actually draw the line between the two. Captain Kidd swore he had been a privateer only with his ship ADVENTURE GALLEY. There is a record that at one time Captain Kidd flew only a red broad pennant, which was believed to signify an order to surrender or no quarter given.

When a vessel such as ADVENTURE GALLEY was built and outfitted, as a privateer it was a well-known fact that in many cases if the privateer was not paying as the crew felt it should, they mutinied, seized the ship and turned to pirating. This was not the case with Captain Kidd, but he did have some trouble in distinguishing between privateer and pirate, which cost him his life by hanging in 1701.

During the latter part of the 1600's under the leadership of Samuel Pepys, the English began the construction of a large Navy. We today are indebted to Samuel Pepys because by nature he was a collector. Being a high naval official some of his collections have survived to give us a better insight as to what constituted this fleet. Pepys also kept a diary, which has survived and has given an account of life during the period in which he lived.

The growth of this Naval Fleet with their high-ranking officers, created a problem concerning flag signaling, such as it was. It was the practice for a naval ship to fly the Union Flag, the combination of the St. Andrew and St. George crosses, from one mast or another signifying the rank of the officer commanding. (The Union Flag at the main, fore or mizzen, according to their rank as full, vice or rear admiral). There were many instances of inconvenience arising from the use of this flag by private ships. Therefore in 1660 the Duke of York gave an order that the Union Flag was to be worn only by the King's Ships, the Naval Fleet.

The first use made of the red, white and blue ensign took place in 1627, in the Duke of Buckingham's expedition to the Isle of Rhe. The Duke divided this fleet into five squadrons. As Admiral and General in Chief, he flew the Standard of England in the main top and the red ensign. The Earl of Lindsay was Vice Admiral and flew the King's usual colours in his foretop and a blue ensign in his main top. The Lord Harvey was Rear Admiral and flew the King's usual colours in his mizzen top and a white flag at the main top. The Earl of Dunby used St. George's flag and Captain Pennington St. Andrew's cross. This made the flags for each squadron commander. This fleet consisted of approximately 200 ships. Very confusing at this date and time is exactly why a certain pennant or flag had not been designed to signify the rank of the officers commanding, thus leaving the Union Flag as the national flag, or colours.

In addition to these flags and ensigns mentioned thus far, after May 2nd, 1670, another flag was widely used in North America. The flag of the Hudson's Bay Company formed on this date flew over all their lands, that of the North American continent that has rivers that empty into Hudson Bay. All ships owned by this Company are still legally, by royal charter, allowed to fly this flag. A former Captain of one of these ships recently told me that they actually flew this flag on their ships up until Canada received its present red and white maple leaf flag on February 15th, 1965. At that time they decided to fly the flag or ensign of the country of the ship's registry, mainly Canada since the majority of these ships were registered in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This was decided because of dissension amongst the French Canadian inhabitants towards anything British. These ships use the ports of the province of Quebec extensively. The Hudson's Bay Company Governor's flag is a white flag containing the company badge, crest or arms (whatever the proper terminology) in the centre and this is the flag flown on land.



HBC Web Site

The Hudson Bay Company Ships flew the “red duster” with the letters HBC on the fly as shown below. I did not know this until I looked at the HBC web site. I always felt the white bed sheet with the company coat of arms was their only flag.



HBC Web Site

The Nova Scotia flag was created in 1621 by Royal Charter. At this time King James I of England and Scotland granted Acadia, the French name for this area to Sir William Alexander who renamed the area Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is Latin for New Scotland. This grant included what is now Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, part of Quebec and part of the present state of Maine. Through my research it has become clear that either a blue flag with a white cross resembling the letter X, or the colours reversed, a white flag with a blue cross resembling the letter X constitutes the flag known as the St. Andrews Cross. Therefore the present flag of Scotland, blue with white cross, and the flag of Nova Scotia, white with blue cross, are both considered the St. Andrew's cross. The Nova Scotia flag also includes the lion of the Scottish Kings in the centre. This also means that Russia flew the St. Andrew's cross, a white flag

with a blue cross, until the adoption of the hammer and sickle in 1917. And of still further interest the flag signifying the letter M in the International Code of Flag Signals, could be termed the St. Andrew's cross. At least it makes for one means of remembering that particular flag or letter.

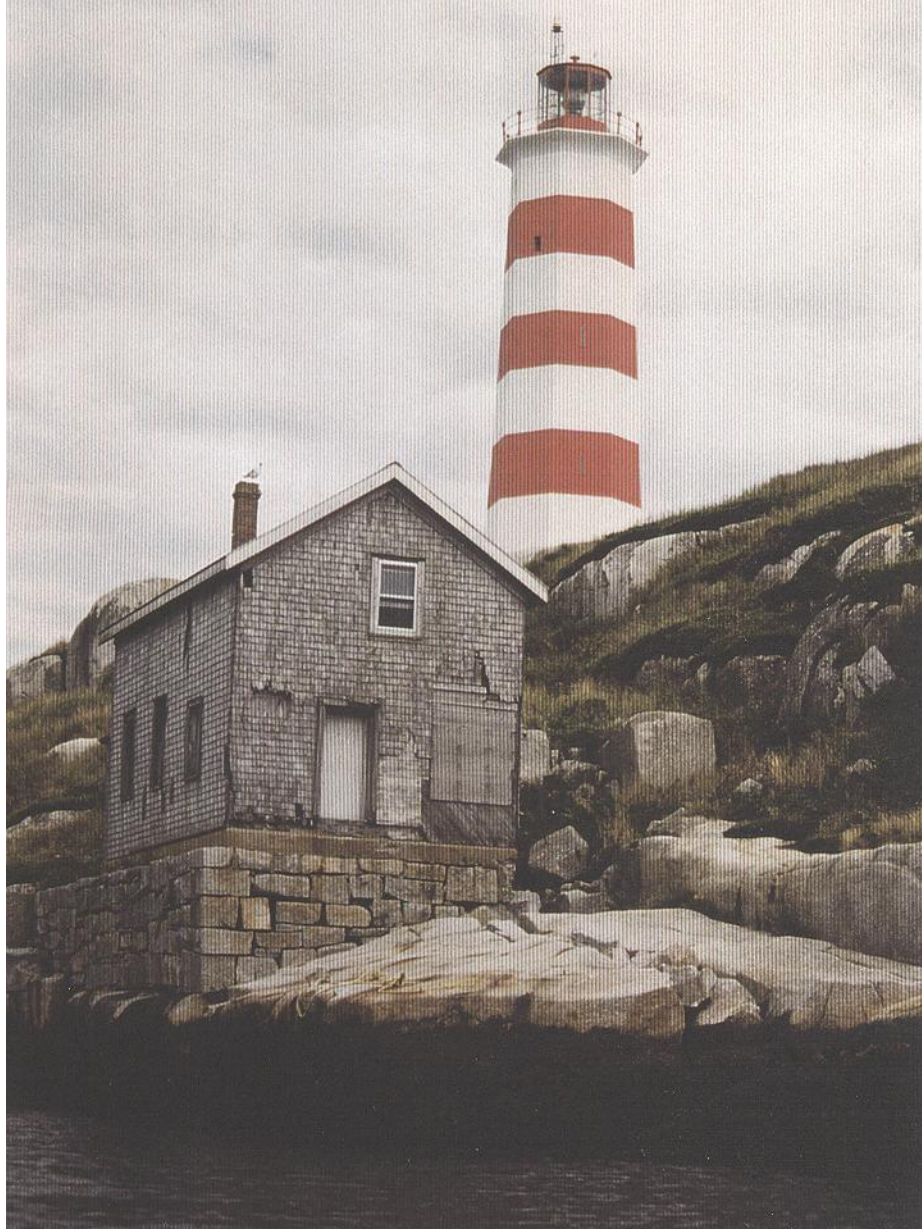


The flag of Nova Scotia

To my knowledge and research I have not been able to locate a ship that flew the Nova Scotia flag signifying the country of registry. Nova Scotia had one of the largest fleets of merchant ships in the world just prior to entering the Dominion of Canada as a province. All of these ships were considered of British registry, flew the British Ensign, and were known as British North American Ships. This same procedure applied to all ships of all the seafaring areas making up the present provinces of the Dominion of Canada.

On July 26th, 1758, the British made their final capture of the French settlement of Louisburg. Up until this date, the history books tell us that this area had changed hands between the French and English on several occasions. All of Nova Scotia, except for Cape Breton Island had been British since the Peace of Utrecht, in 1713. The city of Halifax was not founded until 1749 when Edward Cornwallis commanded a fleet of transports bringing over settlers for this purpose. Cornwallis was Nova Scotia's first Governor.

It is worthy of note that the French had set up a light at Louisburg for the express purpose of guiding ships, which was the first lighthouse in this area of the new world. In 1759 work was begun on the Sambro Island Lighthouse off the approaches to Halifax harbour. But in 1762 a signal station was put in service on Thrum Cap, also in the approaches to Halifax harbour. This was the first station, as such, for communications from the sea to shore. I have not been able to locate the exact detail on this station, but it was a small station in visual range of the fort established on Citadel Hill, now in the centre of the present city of Halifax. It was not able to communicate with a ship, but merely advised the fort of anything approaching the harbour. The British and French had been at war with each other for so long that it was many years before this fear of each other vanished. In 1762 Halifax had received an alarm of possible French invasion. Therefore the reason for the British erecting this Thrum Cap station was to give their military organization located in the area as much warning, in the event of an enemy attack, as possible.



Natasha Roscoe

This is the Sambro Island Lighthouse in 2002. Note the seagull on top of the old chimney.
The old shed is the gas shed where kerosene was stored for the light years ago.

This first Thrum Cap station was undoubtedly nothing more than a high flagpole type, capable of flying either flags, balls constructed from some light material, lanterns of some type for night use, and the like. It merely informed the Citadel Hill station of the number of ships approaching, their types or classifications, and if possible their nationality. As crude as it was, no doubt those in charge were very proud of this station and felt they had the very latest and most fascinating contraption created by man.

In 1755, seven years prior to the establishment of this Thrum Cap signal station, the Acadian French then established in the area of Minas Basin, had been expelled from the area and resettled in what is now the present United States of America. These Acadian French were the remnants of the French settlements in this area. They refused to swear allegiance to the British

government and had also created a fair amount of trouble for the British, by instigating the native Micmac Indians into raids on the British settlements.

It was decided to resettle these vacated French areas, mostly the best farming area in Nova Scotia, from the established English colonies in what are now known as the New England states of the United States of America. The first of these settlers began arriving in 1760, and were known as "The Planters".

The son's of great (six times) Grandfather Thomas West became Planters. Among these were great (five times) Grandfather William with Grandmother Jane and their children, which included great (four times) Grandfather Cyrus and his brother Jabez. Jabez was born in 1737 and Cyrus in 1740. Cyrus remained in the Cornwallis district, which is now part of Kings County, but Jabez returned to the United States and made his home at Machias, in the present state of Maine. He became the Captain of an American Privateer during the American Revolutionary war in 1788-89, another relative who could add a lot to the history of seafaring in this area, had more written records of his activities survived. He is mentioned in Thomas H. Raddall's book "His Majesty's Yankees".

There were no roads to speak of between these settlements containing the newly arrived planters and the new capital of Halifax, which meant that a good deal of their communications was carried out via ship from one place to the other. This involved circumnavigating the whole of the western half of the province of Nova Scotia. Relying solely on wind and weather meant these voyages could be rather lengthy and very arduous.

In 1786 a ship by the name of BETHIA of 230 tons, built at Hull, England, in 1784, visited this area from London, England. She belonged to R. Dale and her Master was Captain P. Ellis who was relieved later in the year by Captain Blair. BETHIA was a popular name for a vessel at this date and time and this was not the BETHIA that the British Admiralty purchased. The British Admiralty purchased a larger vessel with this name, renamed it BOUNTY and sent it to the South Seas, now the South Pacific, to take delivery of a cargo of breadfruit. These breadfruit plants were to be transferred and planted on the island of Jamaica and used as food for the Negro slaves held there. Captain Bligh with eighteen of his shipmates, were cast adrift after a mutiny by the crew led by Fletcher Christian, BOUNTY's mate.

The mutineers took BOUNTY along with several natives of the island of Tahiti and populated Pitcairn Island, in the South Pacific, and burned BOUNTY shortly after their arrival on this island. Captain Bligh performed one of the greatest feats of navigation on record. He sailed the BOUNTY's overloaded ship's boat over three thousand six hundred miles, and saved all but one of those in the boat. The one lost was a seaman who was killed by the natives when they landed on an island for fresh water.

Once Captain Bligh reached England another ship was sent out to transport these breadfruit plants. This trip was successful except for the fact that the slaves in Jamaica refused to eat the breadfruit and therefore the whole effort was a total waste of time.



London News Agency Photos Limited

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY at anchor off Dover, England, 1962. She is "Making Her Number" VYFM, the four flags in a vertical line on the mizzen yard.

There have been several books written and five movies made concerning this incident. In 1962 Metro Goldwyn Mayer Inc. completed a movie of this mutiny and the BOUNTY they used was the first time a ship had been specially built for the sole purpose of filming a movie. This BOUNTY had been built at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, one of the few places in the world with people who had the knowledge required to build such a vessel. I was this BOUNTY's second and last Radio Officer. All other ships used in the making of movies, previous to this BOUNTY, had either been sister ships of the one involved in the plot of the movie being filmed or had been vessels specially converted to play the part. This BOUNTY had been modified to the point it hardly resembled the ship in 1962 when it sank in hurricane Sandy on October 29th, 2012 off the United States East Coast. It was an American ship when it sank and had been for years.

The original BOUNTY was one of the first ships to carry one of the earliest means of communication from ship to ship, on an international or general basis. Although, from the time BOUNTY left the English Channel on December 23rd, 1787, until the mutiny took place on April 28th, 1789, she did not encounter anyone or anything in order to make use of this signal system. But Admiral Kempenfelt had introduced a code of flag signals about the year 1780, and after his tragic death in 1782, other naval officers worked on the problem.

About the year 1801 Sir Home Popham produced a code of flag signals that was formally adopted by the Admiralty in 1803 and it was Popham's code, still comparatively new, that Nelson used to convey his famous signal at Trafalgar.

Popham's code is rather interesting, one you would have to refer to as telegraphy and not spelling, although the Admiralty (British Navy) did consider it spelling for the simple reason any word could be spelled out. Popham had each letter in the alphabet numbered per their sequence in the alphabet. A was number one and so on down to Z, except for two significant points of

interest. He let the number nine serve both the letter I and the little used letter J and the fact that in the 18th century alphabet the letter U followed the letter V. Therefore, this required the use of only ten distinctive flags for the number 0 through to 9.

It is apparent that it would take a very large number of these flags to send a plain language message of any length. So Popham made up codes in two and three numbers up to and including 999 in order for one such code to equal an English word.

Admiral Nelson in his famous signal at Trafalgar, "England expects that every man will do his duty", was able to fly all the words except for DUTY which he had to spell out. Actually it is believed that Nelson wanted to start this signal with "England confides" but was advised against this because the word "confides" would have to be spelled out. Therefore he settled on the signal flown in order to decrease the work involved.

A number of flags used in Popham's code are to be found in our present International Code of Signals. These are: his flag for 1 is our letter X, his 2 is our letter P, his 3 is our letter M except his yellow cross is now white (St. Andrew's Cross). Popham's figure 4 is our letter U. His figure 5 is not used today but was of three equal bars, yellow across the top, red through the middle, and yellow again across the bottom. The United States Navy uses this flag as their figure two. Our pennant for the figure 7 is of the same colour scheme yellow and red horizontally.

Popham's flag for 6 is no longer used. It was also three equal bars, blue on the top, white in the middle, and red across the bottom (the flag of the Netherlands). His flag for 7 is no longer used in the International Code of Signals, although the United States Navy use it for their figure 9, three vertical stripes, blue, white in the middle, and blue again on the fly. Popham's flag for 8 is no longer used except as a flag of truce, a plain white flag. His flag for 9 is our letter K. His flag zero is no longer used. It was divided in two equal triangles of white and blue, the blue being an upright right-angled triangle with the right angle at the bottom of the fly, the white being an inverted right-angle triangle, with the top of the flag held at the right-angle.

Although I often use the national flag of a country as an example for a letter or code flag, this is simply because the colours and description fit. Most flags signifying the nationality of a ship (the flag of the country of registry) are rectangular in shape. All code flags are square, except for the pennants signifying the ten numerical digits, the answering pennant, and the three substitutes or repeaters. Two of these code flags, the letters A and B, are swallow tailed. The ships of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other western navies also use a fourth substitute or repeater, another pennant.

Because two identical flags flying together are difficult to distinguish at a distance, Popham had a substitute or ditto flag. This was a yellow flag with two narrow horizontal bars, one at the very top and the other at the very bottom, in black. For example if it became necessary to use code 331 through 339, or 333 for that matter, by placing the substitute flag in the middle it made this code much easier for the receiving ship or station to read. These substitutes or repeater flags have been retained to our present International Code of Signals as mentioned, except there are now three, the first being yellow bordered in black, the second blue with a white fly, and the third white with a black horizontal bar.

In addition to the three substitutes we have an answering pennant, containing five equal vertical divisions, the two centres being white and the remainder red. I will be discussing the present International Code of Signals later.

It was in 1792 that Claude and Ignace Chappe, of France, perfected their signal system. This was at a time when England was still perfecting her communications by a system of bon fires, a system used by various groups of human type beings over the years. This was also at the time when Napoleon was having a grand old time conquering various sections of the European

continent. The Chappes have been credited with the origin of the word telegraph, which was to become and still is a very popular word.



A drawing by Ronald Finnigan, Kamloops, British Columbia

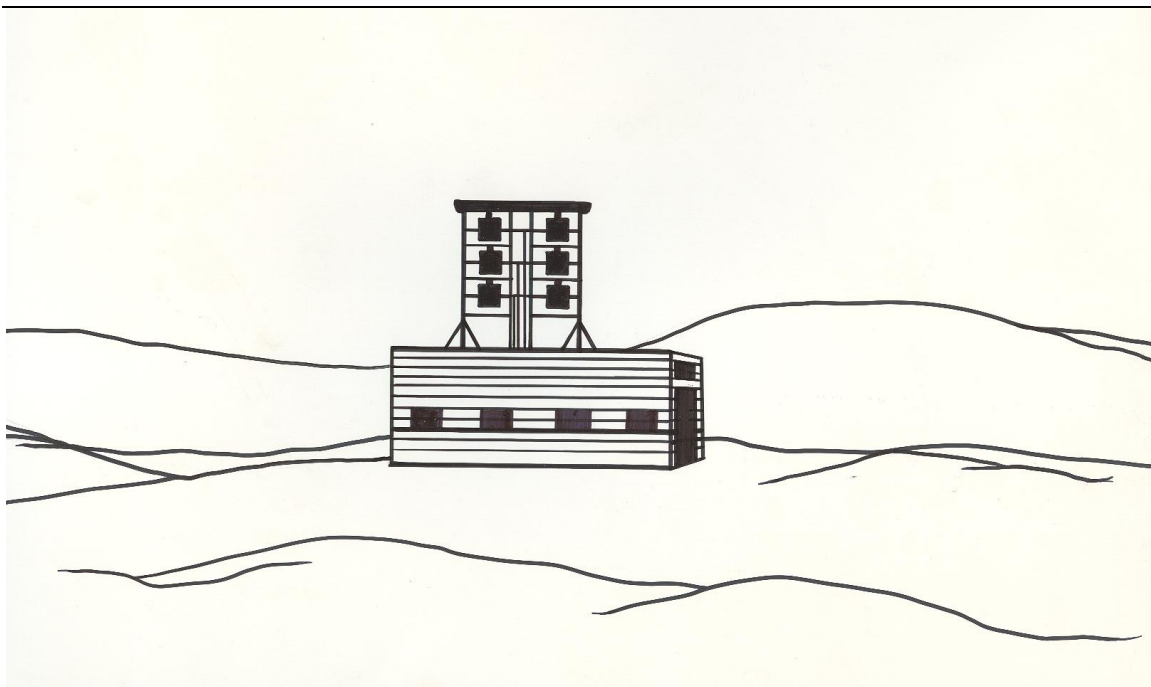
This is the Chappe system of semaphore.

The contraption invented for communications by the Chappes looked rather like a giant stick man, minus the neck and head, a long vertical portion resembling the body, with two arms complete with an elbow and forearm. By a system of ropes and pulleys, through the long vertical portion and controlled at the base, these arms could be adjusted to bend or point at various angles, thereby using the contraption as a form of present day semaphore.

When the British first learned of the Chappe system or contraption as I have called it, they immediately set to work and came up with a similar but much different system, one using a huge box containing six ports complete with shutters for each port. This at its best was another contraption, but one has to admit much improved over a bon fire.

It was a rather time-consuming proposition to pass any messages over these first telegraphs. It was claimed that a message could be sent over 150 miles in 15 minutes. This was a big improvement and thereby received a lot of recognition, but one has to admit a message over 150 miles in 15 minutes would have been a very brief message.

The British shutter system, for example, worked as follows: all ports open meant the station was not at work. All ports closed meant the standby signal for the next telegraph to get ready to receive a message. No doubt the next telegrapher opened or closed his telegraph to signal he was ready to copy. Just to send a letter of the alphabet took a deal of doing on this thing. The alphabet was broken up into four sections and each section was known as a course. Therefore the course had to be sent and then the letter followed. The first course was signaled by closing all ports, the second course by opening all ports, the third by opening all ports on the receivers right and the fourth by opening all ports on the receivers left. The letter could be signaled, by opening or closing the appropriate ports after the course was signaled.



A drawing by Ronald Finnigan, Kamloops, British Columbia

This is the British shutter system of signaling.

The second course was signaled – all ports open – then opening the first port denoted letter G, second letter H, third letter I, and so on through the alphabet. Rather time-consuming to be sure, but it brought the whole town out to watch the sights and marvel at the modern wonder. Those of that generation were quite impressed with these things and had a merry old time with them.

Once these first telegraphs appeared in use, it was not long before everyone became carried away in the excitement, and any number of ingenious rigs, designs, or whatever the proper term should be, followed. The Chappes actually designed various apparatus, and one previous to their system of mechanical arms consisted of a large round face resembling a clock with the letters of the alphabet placed around the clock face. By means of a pointer held in the centre of this clock face, identical to a hand on a clock, the sender merely pointed to the letter in the alphabet in order to send this particular letter to the receiving station.

All these ingenious designs were not restricted to mechanical signal systems alone. Any number of flag signal codes appeared as well. The hard part for us today is to actually learn how much use was made of each or any of these various systems. Granted they were all of some value for the simple fact that the object of the game was to be able to communicate over much greater distances with much greater ease than at any time previous. One individual, worthy of mention, was Colonel MacDonald. When he retired from the British Army Engineers he undertook this hobby as a serious vocation. He is known to have designed in excess of one hundred signaling devices. One in particular involved two flags of two equal bars each, the four bars being of four distinctive colours. Being able to fly either or both flags by any of their four sides meant that eighty-eight codes could be flown. A rather ingenious system except that when the harness enabling these flags to be flown, from either of their four sides had been fitted, close to a gale of wind was needed in order for the flags to blow out so they could be seen. Like Colonel MacDonald, many people who were dabbling in this activity had their designs recorded. These records have survived and have created confusion.

The main reason given Colonel MacDonald for not accepting his systems for use by the Admiralty, in 1824, was that his systems were of telegraph only and that the Admiralty had been using and wanted to continue to use a system of spelling. Telegraph involved a book of codes, both by the sender and receiver. These could very easily become lost or destroyed whereas with spelling the operators involved could use the system without a book of codes as long as they knew the various letters of the alphabet within the code in use.

END

November 1, 2007

This is the Second Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

THE DUKE OF KENT's SIGNAL STATIONS

Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, fourth son of King George III, and father of Queen Victoria, certainly left his mark on Eastern Canada. The province of Prince Edward Island and the town of Kentville, Nova Scotia, (my birth-place and home town) are both named in his honour. We, in communications, remember the Duke of Kent mainly for his Signal Stations. He had been residing in Halifax since the spring of 1794, was in command of the garrison there and was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces in British North America in 1799. He was a virtual ball of energy and as soon as he was appointed commander-in-chief went about changing and improving the military installations around Halifax and throughout the area. The expense involved in carrying out his ambitions was to earn him disfavour from his father and the British government in general. But except for small sailing vessels running around the many miles of coast and the various footpaths across the surrounding country, his Signal Stations were the first means of communication from one point to another in this area.

The Duke of Kent wanted to run these visual signal stations from Halifax a distance of 130 miles to the historic town of Annapolis, with a branch line taking off across the Bay of Fundy to Saint John and on to Fredericton, New Brunswick. Exactly how far these stations progressed is not known. It is known that the line from Halifax to Annapolis was in operation in 1800. Several hills bear the name Telegraph Hill in New Brunswick, so it is assumed some of the stations were completed the full distance to Fredericton.



This is a drawing by Ronald Finnigan, Kamloops, British Columbia

The installation of these stations was a tremendous undertaking. When you consider there were no roads and nothing but manpower to carry the materials necessary through the dense woods, swamps, and so on, to construct each station and set it up for operation then leave a crew of ten to man same with their necessary equipment. Lack of manpower was the one thing that makes it highly unlikely that the line on the New Brunswick side of the Bay of Fundy was ever in service. The Army stationed in New Brunswick at that time would have had to terminate all other duties in order to keep these stations manned. The crossing of the Bay of Fundy was to take place using Isle Haute and this would mean a total break in communication due to the ever-present fog, especially during the summer months. It would appear that this magnificent undertaking lacked a good deal, mainly common sense.

If one could consider one of these stations, which were known as the Duke of Kent's Signal Stations, more important than another it would definitely be the station located on a hill named Camperdown overlooking the approaches to Halifax harbour. This hill is in the village of Portuguese Cove just inside Chebucto Head. It was given the name of Camperdown in honour of Admiral Duncan's famous victory over the Dutch in October 1797. The news of this victory could not have reached Halifax much before the New Year of 1798. This sea battle with the Dutch was just off the Dutch fishing village of Kamperduijn – or Camperdown, as anglicized by the Royal Navy. This Camperdown Signal Station was to remain in service until April 4th, 1926, when it was moved over to the Chebucto Head Lighthouse. It was to return again to Camperdown in 1935 and remained there until it eventually closed in 1953.

These first signal stations consisted of a barrack room with a signal observation platform mounted on the roof. They were constructed on hills in such a way that they were visible from one station to another. It took five people, a Director and four men, to operate a signal at a station. Neither the Director nor any of the other four signalmen knew the contents of the messages they were relaying along these lines of stations. The Director was allowed to know the meaning of five signals only, which translated as follows:

- 1 I am going to use the Alphabet.
- 2 I have finished my present communications.
- 3 I cannot take or repeat your signals.
- 4 You have repeated wrong. I will therefore make my signal over again.
- 5 Annuls the meaning of my last signal.

Although these stations were constructed with the idea of being about twenty miles from each other, in actual practice the majority had to be around seven miles apart, because of the low terrain and poor visibility involved from one to another. At that they must have been put out of commission a good deal of the time because of the weather prevalent in this area.



G. E. Champion

This is the Duke of Kent's Signal Station, Camperdown, as it looked in 1922.

This Camperdown station became important because it was capable of communicating with ships located in the approaches to Halifax. This not only gave the citizens of the Halifax area warning of ships approaching, but now that the station handled actual messages, any message imaginable could be passed to or from these ships. Passengers and crews on ships years ago, because of the deplorable living conditions found in their ships were quite susceptible to illness of various kinds and descriptions. If a vessel approached with sickness on board this could be made known, thereby protecting the city somewhat. Requests for a pilot to guide the vessel into the harbour would be another of the important messages handled. Although the practice was for all pilots to proceed towards an approaching vessel, the one to first reach the vessel was normally the one to get the job of piloting the vessel into Halifax. This station played an important part in first alerting these pilots of the approach of an apparent customer.

After the Duke of Kent was recalled to England and then sent on to command the military interests at Gibraltar, these stations in Nova Scotia remained for a time under the orders that he left. But there is little known of the activity connected with these stations and it appears as though, because of the high cost of operation and maintenance, they slowly disappeared with little or nothing on record after 1802. Actually very few of the original sites of these stations are known. They were a military project and possibly some of the old British military artifacts might reveal some detail on them.

Iris V. Shea, Historian Mainland South Heritage Society wrote that there were four soldiers stationed at the Camperdown site in 1804. She also states there were four soldiers stationed on Sambro Island in 1804. John Howe recorded this detail in 1804. John Howe was the father of Joseph Howe a journalist and politician in the Nova Scotia government of his day. Iris wrote this detail in *Discovering Our Past*, page 4, *Chebucto News*, Vol. 6, No. 10, January 2005.

The Camperdown station is our main interest and over the years it has played a part in much of the history of marine communications and in the navigational aids designed to assist ships in their day-to-day operations. Naturally it has been involved in all the marine incidents for this Halifax area.

When the Signal Book for Camperdown in 1802 was in use, it consisted of two parts. The first or foremost part was a book for general use and was titled *Plan for Naval and Military Signals*. It consisted of a number of general instructions, included an alphabet, and numerical code, and showed the proper procedure for making these signals from a ship. These signals were made by hoisting any objects which could be best seen, such as flags, wicker balls or baskets, lanterns, large pieces of wood, and so forth. The positioning of each of these objects was given a number and meant that number two, six, and eight, for instance, were being flown and not two hundred sixty-eight, eight hundred sixty-two, or any other such meaning.

The most interesting aspect of this, for us today, is that the ship had to use the signal system in use at the coast station. Whereas there was ample room to maneuver ashore and one would assume the coastal station would merely communicate with the ship via the Ship's Code, Home Popham's Code at this time. Not so, and this must have made it most inconvenient for the ship. It is understandable that when these telegraphs, especially the one at Camperdown, were placed in service and the benefit of this service was realized, that it was not long before these signal stations opened at other ports around the area. For example the station placed in service at much the same time at St. John's, Newfoundland used this same type of station, but the actual workings were different. The reason for this is the second Signal Book needed to operate these stations. These second books or parts pertained to the general area for the telegraphs in use. There was one book for the St. John's area, one for the Gibraltar area, and so on around the world for each and every telegraph owned and operated by the vast British military organization. Therefore Camperdown's Second Signal Book, titled "Signal Orders and Instructions", was a small book complete with its leather carrying pouch, but was only for the Halifax area or the communication circuit containing the Camperdown Station. Whether or not the telegraphs running out to Annapolis were in service at this time is not known. This Camperdown book does not provide this information.

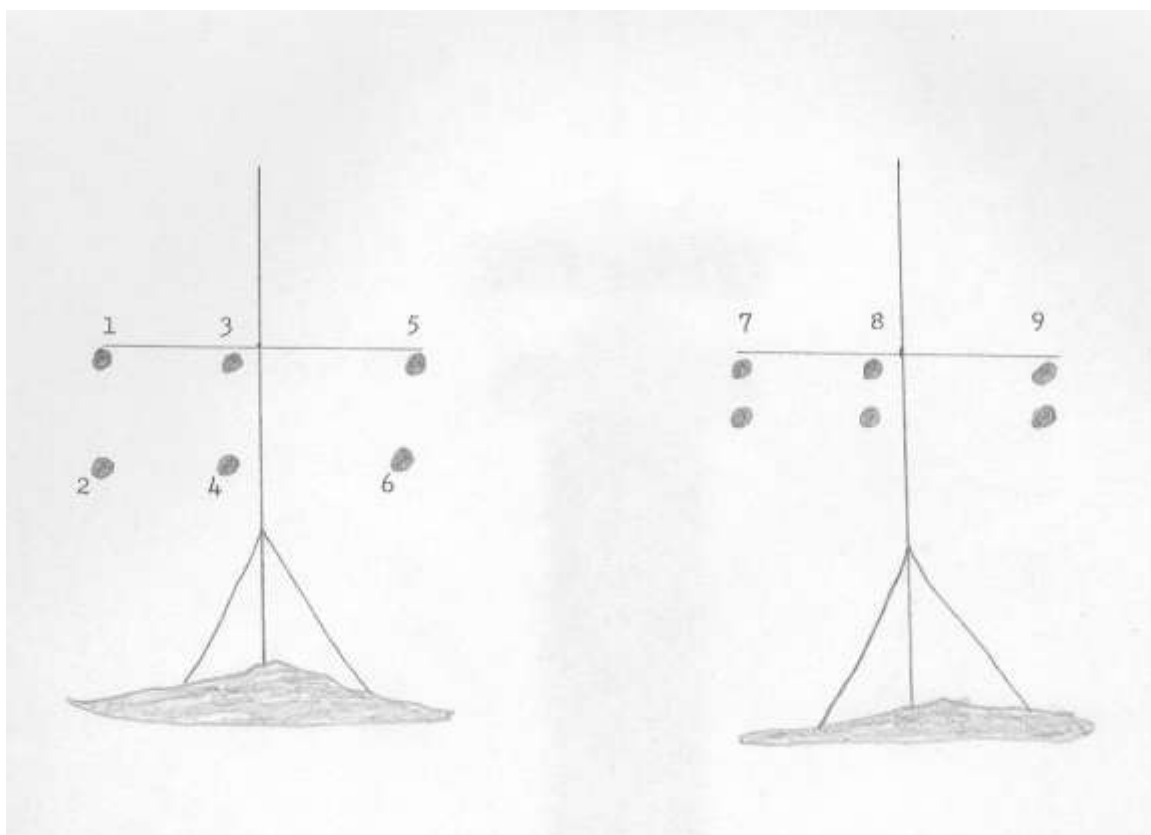
The first known code to signify the Camperdown station was 43, and today these codes are known as call signs. It is interesting to note the various stations, their call codes making-up this communications circuit and they appear here as recorded in the Signal Book:

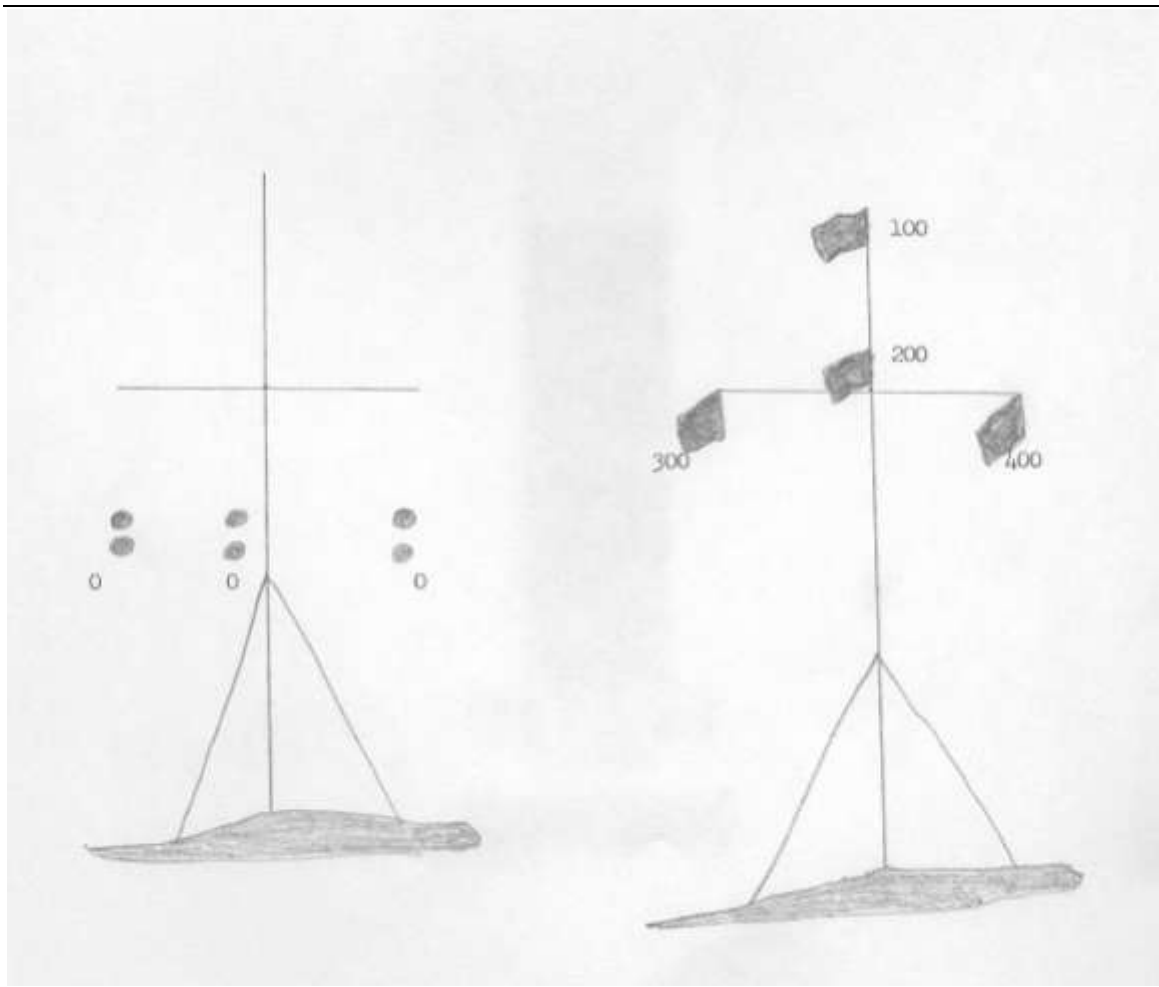
31	Head Quarters
32	Government House
33	The Lodge
34	Fort Sackville
35	The Dock Yard
36	The Black Rock Battery
37	The Narrows
38	Dartmouth
39	The Eastern Passage
40	Fort Clarence
41	M'Nab's Island

42	Mauger's Beach
43	Camperdown
44	Catch Harbour
45	The Light-House
46	Sambro Harbour
47	Prospect Harbour
48	Margaret's Bay
49	Herring Cove
50	York Tower
51	Kavanaugh's Island
52	North West Arm
53	The Prince's Tower
54	Point Pleasant
55	Fort Ogilvie
56	Fort Massey
57	The Citadel
58	The Grand Battery
59	Fort Charlotte
60	The King's Wharf
61	The Ordinance Wharf
62	Lumber Yard

This makes a total of 31 stations within this communications circuit. With a minimum staff of ten per station this circuit would take 300 men to operate. There are no stations other than above listed. There are a number of codes meaning various places a ship would be bound to or from. For example: 78 Philadelphia, 68 Scotland, and so on. The only towns to the western end of the province of Nova Scotia listed are 73 Annapolis, and 74 Windsor. There is no mention of Cornwallis or Horton districts and therefore no way of addressing either of these areas. You could use code 75 some part of the Bay of Fundy not described by signal, or 88 A Nova Scotia Harbour to the Westward of Halifax. Or you could use plain language that involved sending a number of numbers to make up each letter of the alphabet.

Therefore both those sending and receiving a signal had to use the signal book, and since none of those involved in transmitting these signals knew the meaning of the signals, they merely copied the various signals and gave them to a higher authority. Likewise, they merely signaled various signals in transmitting a message. In other words, there was no way one signalman could chat with a "Good-Buddy" down the line.





The transmission of the alphabet which of course involved the transmission of various numbered positions of the objects as flown, were as follows:

- A – 2, 3, 0
- B – 1, 4, 0
- C – 2, 4, 0
- D –
- E – 1, 3
- F – 1, 4
- G – 1, 5
- H – 2
- I –
- J – there was no J in the alphabet in use. They treated the little used J as the letter I.
- K – 2, 4
- L – 2, 5
- M – 2, 0
- N – 3
- O – 3, 5
- P – 3, 0
- Q – 4
- R – 4, 5
- S – 4, 0
- T – 2, 3

U – 1, 3, 5
V – 2, 3, 5
W – 1, 4, 5
X – 2, 4, 5
Y – 1, 3, 0
Z –

There are 24 letters for the alphabet and that is as near as I can make them out. It is hand written and I am not sure the ones I have listed are correct.

The Numerary Signals are printed and much easier to read. They are:

1 – 1
2 – 2
3 – 3
4 – 4
5 – 5
6 – 6
7 – 7
8 – 8
9 – 9
10 – 0
11 – 1, 3
12 – 1, 4
13 – 1, 5
14 – 1, 0
15 – 2, 3
16 – 2, 4
17 – 2, 5
18 – 2, 0
19 – 3, 5
20 – 3, 0
21 – 4, 5
22 – 4, 0
23 – 1, 3, 5
24 – 1, 4, 5
25 – 1, 3, 0
26 – 1, 4, 0
27 – 2, 3, 5
28 – 2, 4, 5
29 – 2, 3, 0
30 – 2, 4, 0
31 – 1, 2
32 – 1, 2, 3
33 – 1, 2, 4
34 – 1, 2, 5
35 – 1, 2, 0
36 – 3, 4
37 – 1, 3, 4
38 – 2, 3, 4
39 – 3, 4, 5
40 – 3, 4, 0
41 – 5, 1
42 – 1, 5, 0
43 – 2, 5, 0
44 – 3, 5, 0

45 – 4, 5, 0
46 – 6, 3
47 – 6, 4
48 – 6, 5
49 – 6, 0
50 – 6, 3, 5
51 – 6, 4, 5
52 – 6, 3, 0
53 – 6, 4, 0
54 – 1, 7
55 – 2, 7
56 – 7, 5
57 – 7, 0
58 – 1, 7, 5
59 – 2, 7, 5
60 – 1, 7, 0
61 – 2, 7, 0
62 – 1, 8
63 – 2, 8
64 – 3, 8
65 – 4, 8
66 – 1, 3, 8
67 – 2, 3, 8
68 – 1, 4, 8
69 – 2, 4, 8
70 – 1, 9
71 – 2, 9
72 – 3, 9
73 – 4, 9
74 – 9, 5
75 – 9, 0
76 – 1, 3, 9
77 – 1, 4, 9
78 – 2, 3, 9
79 – 2, 4, 9
80 – 1, 9, 5
82 – 2, 9, 5
83 – 2, 9, 0
84 – 9, 3, 5
85 – 9, 4, 5
86 – 9, 3, 0
87 – 9, 4, 0
88 – 1, 2, 3, 5
89 – 2, 4, 5
90 – 1, 2, 3, 0
91 – 1, 2, 4, 0
92 – 1, 3, 4, 5
93 – 2, 3, 4, 5
94 – 1, 3, 4, 0
95 – 2, 3, 0
96 – 1, 3, 5, 0
97 – 2, 3, 5, 0
98 – 1, 4, 5, 0
99 – 2, 4, 5, 0

“A Flag at the Mast-head adds 100, A Flag half staff adds 200, A Flag at the East Yard Arm adds 300, & a Flag at the West Yard Arm adds 400 to the Numerary Signal hoisted with them.”

The code 95 is interesting. They must have left the third digit blank in the hoist or if it were a misprint in the Signal Book someone should have hand corrected the entry.

Code 499 must have been felt the limit, at least there is no provision to go higher.

In the Signal Book “Plan for Naval and Military Signals” one finds the exact same system in use except the codes are different and are as follow:

A – 1
B – 2
C – 3
D – 4
E – 5
F – 1, 3
G – 1, 4
H – 1, 5
I – 1, 6
J – there is no letter J as described above.
K – 2, 3
L – 2, 4
M – 2, 5
N – 2, 6
O – 3, 5
P – 3, 6
Q – 4, 5
R – 4, 6
S – 1, 3, 5
T – 1, 4, 5
U – 1, 3, 6
V – 1, 4, 6
W – 2, 3, 5
X – 2, 4, 5
Y – 2, 3, 6
Z – 2, 4, 6

Code 6 alone divided one word from another. Note the positioning of the letters U and V in the alphabet are as we use them today.

The Numerary Table is also different and is as follows:

1 – 1
2 – 2
3 – 3
4 – 4
5 – 5
6 – 6
7 – 7
8 – 8
9 – 9
10 – 0
11 – 1, 2
12 – 1, 3
13 – 1, 4

14 – 1, 5
15 – 1, 6
16 – 1, 8
17 – 1, 9
18 – 1, 0
19 – 2, 3
20 – 2, 4
21 – 2, 5
22 – 2, 6
23 – 2, 8
24 – 2, 9
25 – 2, 0
26 – 3, 4
27 – 3, 5
28 – 3, 6
29 – 3, 9
30 – 3, 0
31 – 4, 5
32 – 4, 6
33 – 4, 9
34 – 4, 0
35 – 5, 6
36 – 7, 3
37 – 7, 4
38 – 7, 5
39 – 7, 6
40 – 8, 5
41 – 8, 6
42 – 0, 5
43 – 0, 6
44 – 1, 2, 3
45 – 1, 2, 4
46 – 1, 2, 5
47 – 1, 2, 6
48 – 1, 3, 4
49 – 1, 3, 5
50 – 1, 4, 5
51 – 1, 3, 6
52 – 1, 4, 6
53 – 1, 5, 6
54 – 1, 8, 5
55 – 1, 8, 6
56 – 1, 3, 9
57 – 1, 4, 9
58 – 1, 3, 0
59 – 1, 4, 0
60 – 1, 0, 5
61 – 1, 0, 6
62 – 2, 3, 4
63 – 2, 3, 5
64 – 2, 4, 5
65 – 2, 3, 6
66 – 2, 4, 6
67 – 2, 5, 6
68 – 2, 8, 5
69 – 2, 8, 6

70 – 2, 3, 9
 71 – 2, 4, 9
 72 – 2, 3, 0
 73 – 2, 4, 0
 74 – 2, 0, 5
 75 – 2, 0, 6
 76 – 3, 4, 5
 77 – 3, 4, 6
 78 – 3, 5, 6
 79 – 4, 5, 6
 80 – 7, 3, 5
 81 – 7, 4, 5
 82 – 7, 3, 6
 83 – 7, 4, 6
 84 – 0, 3, 5
 85 – 0, 4, 5
 86 – 0, 3, 6
 87 – 0, 4, 6
 88 – 1, 2, 3, 5
 89 – 1, 2, 4, 5
 90 – 1, 2, 3, 6
 91 – 1, 2, 4, 6
 92 – 1, 3, 4, 5
 93 – 1, 3, 4, 6
 94 – 1, 3, 5, 6
 95 – 1, 4, 5, 6
 96 – 2, 3, 4, 5
 97 – 2, 4, 6
 98 – 2, 3, 5, 6
 99 – 2, 4, 5, 6

Note, 97 missing a digit or has a blank spot in its hoist. Rather interesting but I have no idea the reason behind the missing digit in the 95 Camperdown code and this 97 code.

As can be seen it took a lot of time to do any transmitting. How the Admiralty (British Navy) ever considered this a spelling code is beyond me. The simple fact that you could spell something on it must have been their only line of thinking, because none of those actually operating the equipment knew how to spell anything on it. It would take several hours for a message, especially one of any length, to go any distance. But, and I quote the Signal Book: “To save time in using the alphabet, a ball hoisted where best seen, will be a sufficient acknowledgement for one letter, and lowered in answer to a second”. So much for speed. A flag was used for the hundreds and it denoted 100 when flown from the masthead or top of the mast. 200 was just above the yard or crosspiece. 300 was when flown from the tip of the east yardarm. 400 was when flown from the tip of the west yardarm. I do believe whoever created the book felt 499 was the limit because there was no arrangement made for 500 and above in either signal system.

Your station is within the stations listed with Camperdown, and you have lost your boat and an adjacent station wants to tell you all about it, mainly “Your Boat cannot Return” which is code 219. He, the adjacent station, flies his 200 flag, a large flag of any type which can be clearly seen from just above the yard or crosspiece, along with code three and code five flag, ball, basket or whatever, to signal the figures for 19 per the Numary table. All three placed in position at the same time. Therefore, you then knew your boat could not return. All this of course takes three men to hoist the three pieces involved, with the Director shouting instructions in true military fashion. Quite likely with the leather-lunged characters the Army seems to operate best, his orders to these signalmen carried nearly as far as the adjacent station. This signal, of course, tells you nothing more than “Your Boat cannot Return.”. If you want to know why or if the originator of this signal wants to tell you why, you or he has to revert to plain language – there being no other code appropriate.

According to the multitude of instructions given in this Signal Book, the mast was to be 50 feet high and the topmast 40 feet, which would make it a total of 90 feet above ground. The yard was to be 40 feet, so it would make for an imposing piece of ingenuity to say the least. It would also have to be well anchored or the high winds quite common to the area would soon put it out of commission, with pieces well scattered or broken.

During this time, 1802, my Great Grandparents, including Great (four times) Grandfather Josiah Rusco, who arrived from Connecticut, United States, about 1776, would be going about their day to day routine in the Cornwallis district. These people must have realized a good deal of amusement, and no doubt could tell some interesting stories from the one or two of those stations within their visual range. A message from Halifax to Annapolis in six hours is really quite fast. There was the case of Annapolis being advised in only fifteen minutes of the arrival of the Duke of Kent in Halifax but this signal would have been prearranged in order for the message to be transmitted in such a short time.

Great (eight times) Grandfather William Rusco was from Essex, England. He was a follower of Rev. Thomas Hooker who arrived in Boston in September 1633 in the GRIFFIN. William Rusco and family came over in the INCREASE in 1635. This listing for William Rusco and family is dated April 13, 1635. The vessel's master was Robert E. Lea. On March 31st, 1636, Rev. Hooker and his entire congregation, including William Rusco and family, left what came to be Harvard College Yard and walked some 90 miles through the woods and settled in what has become the city of Hartford, Connecticut. They drove 160 cattle and fed on their milk along the way. William became Surveyor of Highways in 1641 and the jailer in 1649-50. William moved to Jamaica, New York.

Our forefathers spelled our name with many variations because of the inefficiency mentioned, but it became Roscoe with my Great (three times) Grandfather James who resided at Halls Harbour, Nova Scotia. He lived from 1786 until 1860. The majority of my forefathers were farmers like so many years ago. Those before Josiah settled in Connecticut and New York and those after in Kings County, Nova Scotia.

Great Grandfather Spicer and family, living in the village of Spencer's Island, which is a village on the mainland of Nova Scotia facing Spencer's Island, would not have been in visual range of the station on Isle Haute. It is unlikely that they could see one of these stations from their home, but they, like all the others of that generation would have known of them. There is little that can be said or written about shipping in Nova Scotia without mentioning their descendants, who took to the water like ducks. Not only did they build ships but they sailed them all over the world and at least one of these ships was named for them. Therefore many of the most interesting incidents connected with these early sailing ships, involved a Spicer in one way or another. These descendants likely acquired this ambition naturally. Great (three times) Grandfather Robert Spicer had been a coachman to the father of the Lady Priscilla Cholmondeley, a Welsh Lady. While he was employed in this capacity, he and Lady Priscilla developed an affair of the heart that ended in her eloping with him. This, quite understandably, considering the date, time, and place, created quite a commotion to the point that Lady Cholmondeley was disinherited, meaning she had no dowry for this marriage and was literally kicked out of her family. It is believed that they took a ship from Plymouth Sound for America, but be that as it was, they were found in America and remained loyal to the British side during the American Revolution.

After the American Revolution or war of Independence, Colonel Elisha Lawrence petitioned for a grant of land for a number of discharged soldiers and their dependants of whom Lieutenant Robert Spicer was one. He came to Halifax partly disabled and he and the small children were carried ashore by two black men who came with them. From there he and his family, Priscilla and three children, went on to Spencer's Island claiming his grant of 500 acres that was dated 1785. Like so many of these people which were known as "The Loyalists", they started out in a log cabin; this one overlooked beautiful Greville Bay.

Soldiers returning to England, after the War of Independence, told Priscilla's parents that their daughter had married a brave man who had been awarded his commission in the field, and that she and her family were living in their log cabin. Priscilla's Mother stated that in that case, she must now have the dowry denied her when she eloped with Robert. A small sailing vessel was sent over with this dowry, which contained an

assortment of furniture, materials, and gold. A frame house was then built to house the family and these articles. They did not want for anything after that and Robert lived until 1810 and Priscilla until 1820. Priscilla's Mother had also sent along Daffodil bulbs and Peony root, with this dowry, which became spread hither and yon around the area, because each new bride in the family took some for her own personal flower bed.

Getting back to the Duke of Kent's Signal Stations, it was possible to operate these stations at night, as mentioned, by the use of lanterns in place of the wicker balls, flags, pennants, and such. Some stations remained open around the clock, while others operated only during normal working hours. The long hours which made up a normal day at that time, meant these day stations would be open from practically sunrise to sunset especially during the shorter hours of daylight in the winter months. A great deal of emphasis was placed on punishment then. Apparently the main way of controlling the working class of citizen was to threaten him with a flogging or worse, hanging, if he did not produce the way the upper class expected. The Duke of Kent often sent orders over the telegraph to flog defaulters. Many of the codes in the Camperdown Signal Book cover this subject.

The efficiency of a telegraph was controlled via the director. It took four men and a director to operate these stations because all flags, balls, and whatever was being used, had to be hoisted and lowered at the same time. As written instructions within this Signal Book state:

“The Director has additional pay, Viz 1/ per day where there is both day and night duty and 9 for day duty only) which is forfeited for inaccuracy, or for not answering a Signal within five minutes from the time it is hoisted.”

It would have required a minimum of nine stations between Halifax and Windsor. Each was permitted five minutes to answer, so it could take as long as forty-five minutes to answer the one signal along the route. Therefore the signal advising of the Duke of Kent's arrival in Halifax, which made the circuit to Annapolis in fifteen minutes, was very good indeed.

This 1802 Signal Book, containing the signals for the communications circuit involving Camperdown, gives us some insight into the first Thrum Cap Station installed in 1762. This insight, written as it appears in the Signal Book, is in the form of “Description Signals at the Mast Head of the Halifax Telegrafe”. This is the remnant of this first station and is as follows:

A Union, A Flag Ship.
Ditto with Red Pendant over, A two decker.
Ditto with Blue Pendant over, A frigate.
Ditto with White Pendant over, A Small armed Vessel.
A Red Flag pierced White, A Packet.
A Blue Pendant, A Ship.
A Red Pendant, A brig.
A White Pendant, A topsail sloop, or schooner.
A Red Flag, A neutral armed vessel.
Ditto with Blue Pendant under, A neutral ship.
Ditto with Red Pendant under, A neutral brig.
Ditto with White Pendant under, A neutral sloop or schooner.
A French Jack, An enemy's fleet.
A Blue Pendant under French Pendant, An Enemy's ship.
A Red Pendant under ditto, An Enemy's brig.
A White Pendant under ditto, An Enemy's sloop or schooner.
A Union Jack over either of the Enemy's signals, means that the vessels are in our possession.
When a vessel requires assistance, a ball will be hoisted at the mast-head with the descriptive colours.

N.B The only mixed colours used to describe Vessels are a Red Pierced White, a French Jack, and French Pendant; therefore when any other mixed colours are flying on the Citadel Hill, the signals have a private meaning, and are not for vessels.

Explanation of Signals made on the Ensign Staff on Citadel Hill:-

The Royal Standard or Large Union, for Rejoicing Days-during Salutes-and when Kings' Ships leave the Harbour.

A Red Flag, When a vessel comes from Europe.

A White Flag, When a vessel comes from Newfoundland.

A Blue Flag, When a vessel comes from the West-Indies.

A Red Pendant, When a vessel comes from the States.

A Blue Pendant, When a vessel comes from some part of the world not mentioned above.

A White Pendant over either of the above, means that the vessel coming in, has left port, at the same time or before a vessel already arrived.

SIGNALS for Desertion on the Ensign Staff:

A Ball, For each Man of the Royal Nova Scotia Regt.

Ditto with a Flag over, For Men of Engineers or Artillery.

Ditto with a Flag under, For Men of Royal Fusilier Regt.

Ditto with Pendant over, For Men of Newfoundland Regt.

Ditto with Pendant under, For Men of Surry Ranger Regt.

SIGNALS for Desertion by Night:

Four Lights under each other, For Men of Nova Scotia Regt.

Ditto with one over, For Men of the Surry Ranger Regt.

Ditto with one to the Eastward, For Men of Engineers or Artillery.

Ditto with one to the Westward, For Men of the Royal Fusilier Regt.

(note) As the Night Signal for Desertion does not express Numbers, it will be lowered and hoisted for each man, after it has been answered.

This is the detail of 1802. I have been unable to locate this detail for 1762. Possibly there were changes in exactly forty years of service but the overall operation would have varied little from the above.

THE SHANNON AND THE CHESAPEAKE

The United States Navy has retained a number of the statements made by their famous and former commanders as part of their tradition. These are seen in print often, especially in recruiting advertisements. One of these statements, "Don't give up the ship", was made by Captain James Lawrence of the USS CHESAPEAKE. He made this during a battle on June 1st, 1813, fought off Boston, between the CHESAPEAKE and the HMS SHANNON. The SHANNON defeated the CHESAPEAKE in this duel and then escorted the CHESAPEAKE back to Halifax. They entered Halifax on Sunday, June 6th, 1813, another of the many famous incidents to have taken place in this area. Captain Lawrence died from wounds received in this battle while CHESAPEAKE was in sight of the Lighthouse on Sambro Island. This involved the newly formed United States of America and the former mother country of Great Britain during the war of 1812. It was one of the few naval engagements during this brief war. Anyone interested in the detail involved in this duel could find nothing lacking in the excellent book "The SHANNON and the CHESAPEAKE" by Admiral H. F. Pullen.

According to an entry in her logbook the SHANNON exchanged signals with a shore station while awaiting the fog to lift off the approaches to Halifax harbour. It is believed that this brief communication was with station 45 The Lighthouse, which was the lighthouse on Sambro Island. Because of the fog station 43 Camperdown is not known to have communicated with SHANNON. Station 57, The Citadel has been

credited with advising Halifax town of the approach of SHANNON and CHESAPEAKE, and this would have involved one or more of the many stations surrounding the area, but not likely old 43 – Camperdown.

November 1, 2007

This is the Third Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

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First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

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THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SIGNALS AND CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S CODE OF SIGNALS

At this time, the first half of the nineteenth century, a great many people were seriously creating various means of visual communications by a good number of many ingenious contraptions. It soon became apparent that something would have to be done to come to a uniform system on an International basis, if a means of benefit to all was to work as efficiently as possible. Therefore a committee was formed to bring this about by the British Board of Trade. The first International Code was drafted in 1855. This code contained 70,000 signals and used only 18 flags. It was not published until two years later in 1857 and contained two parts. The first part contained International Signals, and the second, Signals for British Vessels only. At this same time the certificates of competency for seamen became a permanent requirement for all seafaring personnel.

Although this first International Code of Signals was adopted by most of the seafaring nations, it is interesting to note that Captain Marryat's Code of Signals remained the most popular and was still found in use as late as 1895. Some writers on this subject claim that Captain Marryat took over the works of Home Popham, who had created the code of signals used by Nelson at Trafalgar, while others claim his code was one he created alone. But, the fact remains that his was the one that was the most popular of them all.

Like so many who worked at bringing about an improvement in communications, Captain Marryat was an officer in the Royal Navy. He had his code of signals published through the firm of Richardson Brothers in London. The last issue he personally edited was the one for the year 1841, after which Mr. Richardson extended and improved this signal code. By the time the 1856 edition came out, it was rare to find a European vessel that was not using this code. This 1856 code consisted of six parts as follows:

- 1) A List of English Men of War.
- 2) A List of Foreign Men of War.
- 3) A List of Merchant Ships of all Nations.
- 4) A List of Lighthouses, Ports, Headlands, Rocks, Shoals, Reefs, &c.
- 5) A Collection of Sentences.
- 6) The Vocabulary.

As can be seen this would be a most valuable book to have on board a vessel with no other means of communication. Mr. Richardson was in the business of producing these books and intended to put out as good a product as he could. The 1856 edition cloth bound sold for twelve shillings. In 1926 the International Code of Signals for the use of all nations sold for one pound five shillings.

Captain Marryat had not only been stationed in Halifax but had visited the area frequently during his naval career. He became a very popular writer and took an early retirement from the Navy in order to devote his full time to writing. When he retired he was in command of HMS ARIADNE on station in the Azores.

Ironically, ARIADNE's call code was 43 in his code of signals, identical to Camperdown in the Nova Scotia Code of Signals.

The first International Code of Signals that was published in 1857 was a fairly large document in the form of a hard covered book. This was the origin of the official numbers assigned to ships, and more important for us radio operators, the origin of the four letter signal codes assigned to ships for a uniform and simple means of identification. For some unknown reason these four letter codes commenced with the letter H, and it is interesting to note that there was no way of telling the country in which the vessel was registered by these flag signal codes. This latter facet did not take place until the many revisions that came about from the 1933 edition of this International Code of Signals, when the Flag or Visual Signal Code and the Wireless or Radio Call Sign became one and the same.

Each and every vessel has been assigned an official number since this first International Code of Signals of 1857 and they are assigned these numbers to this day. It is also mandatory to carve these numbers inside a wooden vessel and have these numbers welded into a main frame of a steel vessel. These numbers appear on all the official records of each and every vessel but today the signal code is issued only to vessels fitted with some means of radio communication and these signal codes are issued by the authorities within the country that the vessel is registered. Therefore, if a vessel changes her country of registry this signal code changes accordingly. The four-letter signal code is a much easier and more convenient means of identifying any ship. Why we in Canada did not use our full international allocations is another of the many mysteries surrounding this portion of our communications. I will go into this in more detail later. Using these call codes means many things. The first and foremost is that any number of vessels can have the same name, but this call will signify the exact vessel in question. It is much easier to identify a certain ship by merely four letters, than by the lengthy names some of them have been assigned. Another fact is that it is a simple means of identifying the nationality of any vessel in question. Still further is the simple fact that many countries seem to find some excuse for splitting their call code allotments into various sections so that a certain prefix will identify one class or type of vessel from another. For some strange reason I have had an interest in this since I first became a radio operator. The first or first two characters of any call sign will tell me a lot about the station using that call sign. This I will also describe in more detail later.

HELIOGRAPH

As so often happens when something has been placed in service and has been working quite efficiently for some time, it soon becomes obsolete. By the time this first International Code of Signals became available, although it had little to do with any inland signal station, these inland signal stations very quickly became obsolete. Mr. Morse had perfected the landline electric telegraph to the point that the Nova Scotia Electric Telegraph Company was formed in 1851. This put an end to the majority of the visual stations, except for a few along the coast engaged in communicating with ships. These coastal stations would remain in service for another hundred years. Some, including Camperdown, were to use a variety of visual systems including that of heliograph.

I have found no actual record of heliograph ever being in use at Camperdown. So many of the old-timers who had at least a passing acquaintance with the station mention this fact that I feel certain that at one time it was in use. The Citadel Hill station can be seen from Camperdown, weather permitting, and I honestly feel the Army did communicate via heliograph over that distance. It was not until Marconi installed his first wireless stations around the coast that either the landline telegraph or the telephone was placed in service at this site.

Heliograph was a visual signaling system used during the late 1800's and remained to see some use as late as World War II. The Armies of several countries used this equipment and the equipment varied from country to country. It was a system of mirrors used to flash sunlight in Morse code. The distance that heliograph could normally be seen was 30 miles with the naked eye and much further with a telescope. The limiting factors were the clearness of the sky, the size of the mirrors used, and the length of uninterrupted sight.

Heliograph improved the speed of these stations in passing messages. A good operator using Morse code via light can copy around 13 words per minute. During the time that heliograph may have been used at Camperdown the station consisted of a staff of four soldiers. The one in charge held the rank of Corporal and the other three were signalmen, or heliographers. All four were assigned the necessary duties to see the station operate in an efficient manner. No doubt, one of the signalmen was cook. With reduction in staff it would also indicate that these signalmen were communicating with the vessels via Captain Marryat's Code of Signals or the International Code of Signals, one that did not involve the manpower that the first system required.

Heliograph certainly helped in speeding up communications. It is surprising how many messages can be handled or passed from one of these stations to another. In other words with the advent of the heliograph, plus a signal lamp for night use, using Morse code, good operators could move much traffic in the form of messages over these circuits.

THE TELEGRAPH

The telegraph preceded the railroad along the main arteries of the province of Nova Scotia. Some locations had telegraph service for as much as twenty years or more prior to a railroad line running through their area. The telegraph lines were installed in Saint John, New Brunswick, connecting New York before they were installed around the Bay of Fundy to the city of Halifax. This produced a most interesting bit of history for Nova Scotia in that a Pony Express was operated – every bit as wild and woolly as any out west. The reason for this was that the world was every bit as hungry for news then as it is today. On the arrival of a ship in Halifax from Europe a pony-express man would obtain the latest newspapers normally rowed ashore from the vessel in the approaches to the harbour. On receipt of this he would ride like mad, obtaining a fresh horse at various relay points, until he reached the Annapolis Basin. There the news was placed aboard a small steam packet, which was awaiting his arrival, and it would run full tilt for Saint John, so that this news could be telegraphed to New York City. This express operated for less than one year but none the less was every bit as colourful as any other Pony Express.

The telegraph lines eventually reached the city of Halifax, putting the Pony Express out of service immediately. The town of Digby opened its first telegraph office on December 3rd, 1855, on the second floor of a store then owned by a Mr. Edward M. Marshall, located on the eastern side of Water Street. This was four years after the formation of the Nova Scotia Electric Telegraph Company by an act of the Provincial Government in 1851. Digby's first telegraph operator was John Robinson who received a salary of 25 pounds per annum payable in monthly installments. The receipts for January 1856 were 6 pounds 14 shillings and 4-1/2 pence. The balance for the year ending December 1856 showed one penny in favour of the Company, but the main expenditure was for office furniture that would not require replacing for some time. The balance for this Digby office for the year of 1859 showed 7 pounds 5 shillings and 10-1/2 pence in favour of the Company. Therefore, this new means of communication was well patronized and showed a good profit to the Company, the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia.

It is practically impossible to try to explain the value of money in 1855, or compare it with anything we could understand today. But, should it be of any help, the Captain of a Saint John, New Brunswick, ship "signed-on" in 1878 for a salary of 15 pounds per month with a gratuity of 20 pounds at the end of the voyage if it was terminated in a satisfactory manner. The Mate who signed on with this Captain was paid 10 pounds per month, and the Second Mate 7 pounds per month. This means that Mr. Robinson, the telegraphist in question, was paid around 2 pounds per month, or to be more explicit something less than half of what this second mate received. My experience at sea in the 1970's was for the Radio Officer to be paid much the same as the second mate. Naturally, salaries vary a good deal from one job to another today as they did in the 1800's.

There was a telegraph office in operation at Weymouth, Nova Scotia, in 1858, at which time Mr. C. D. Jones was the Manager and Operator. The Western Counties Railroad did not open for service between Digby and Yarmouth until September 29th, 1879. The first telegraph offices around Nova Scotia were owned by the Nova Scotia Electric Telegraph Company. In May 1860, the American Telegraph Company leased all telegraph lines in Nova Scotia and controlled the telegraph operation from Newfoundland to

Louisiana, retaining the Directors and Managers of the old Nova Scotia Electric Telegraph Company. The Western Union Telegraph organization took over this company after a few decades of its operation. The Western Union Company retained offices within the province of Nova Scotia until well after World War II. The telegraph was a big part of the operation of all railroads soon after they started operating. The railroads had a combined Railroad Station Agent – Telegraph Operator at most of their Railroad Stations as soon as they were in operation. The railroad used telegraph for various train orders and other railroad business. I've not found the date when the railroads of Nova Scotia started handling routine message traffic. They handled these messages as far back as I can remember and took this service over completely when Western Union terminated its operation in this area. As can be seen, it was a period of nearly 24 years that the telegraph operated in Digby prior to the arrival of the railroad.

The following is a list of the Railroad Stations of the Dominion Atlantic Railroad, the number of the station, the name or location, and the telegraph call code for those that were fitted with telegraph. The Dominion Atlantic Railroad was a branch of the Canadian Pacific Railroad that operated in the province of Nova Scotia.

Halifax Sub.

1000 Halifax	OC
1001 Armdale	
1002 Fairview Junction	
1003 Rockingham	A
1004 Bedford	BD
1005 Windsor Junction	WI
1006 Beaverbank	BN
1007 Fenertys	FN
1008 Groves Quarry	
1009 South Uniacke	
1010 Mount Uniacke	BU
1011 Quarry	
1012 Stillwater	SW
1013 Ellershous	US
1015 Newport	NO
1016 Three Mile Plains	
1017 Windsor	RW
1018 Falmouth	FA
1019 Shaw Bog	SB
1020 Hantsport	HN
1022 Avonport	AV
1023 Horton Landing	H
1025 Grand Pre	GP
1026 New Pit	
1027 Wolfville	CY
1028 Port Williams	MS
1029 New Minas	NM
1030 Kentville	HB



Public Archives Nova Scotia

This is the railroad station at Kentville, Nova Scotia, about 1900. This was the home of landline telegraph station "HB".

Kentville Sub.

1030 Kentville	HB
1089 Coldbrook	CB
1090 Cambridge	JC
1093 Waterville	V
1094 Berwick	BK
1096 Aylesford	JD
1097 Auburn	AU
1098 Kingston	K
1099 Wilmot	NY
1100 Middleton	DN
1102 Brickton	BKN
1103 Lawrencetown	JI
1104 Paradise	RA
1105 Bridgetown	BG
1107 Tuppersville	UK
1108 Round Hill	RO
1109 Round Hill Pit	
1110 Annapolis Royal	AN

Kingsport Sub.

1030 Kentville	HB
1062 Aldershot	DR
1063 Mill Village	
1065 Centreville	CV
1066 Ford Crossing	
1068 Sheffield Mills	
1069 Hillaton	
1070 Canning	I was told RS but needs confirmation.
1071 Pereaue	
1073 Kingsport	

Weston Sub.

1065 Centreville	CV
1077 Northville	
1078 Billtown	
1080 Lakeville	
1081 Woodville	
1083 Grafton	
1084 Somerset	
1085 Weston	

Yarmouth Sub.

1110 Annapolis Royal	AN
1111 Clementsport	CN
1113 Cornwallis	RN
1114 Deep Brook	DB
1115 Bear River	BR
1116 Digby	BY
1175 Digby Wharf	
1117 Acaciaville	ACAC
1119 North Range	NR
1120 Plympton	PN
1121 Weymouth	QN
1123 Church Point	RU
1124 Little Brook	LB
1125 Saulnierville	SA
1126 Meteghan	AC
1128 Hectanooga	NG
1129 Brazil Lake	B
1130 Ohio	O
1132 Hebron	MI
1133 Yarmouth	J



Mrs. Ellsworth Kinney

This is the town of Weymouth, Nova Scotia, 1905. The Railroad Station is up from the two three-master schooners awaiting a lumber cargo. The landline telegraph served this town for at least 110 years and the station with call code "QN" was housed in the Railroad Station.

Truro Sub.

1017 Windsor	RW
1035 Dimocks	DKS
1036 Mantua	MTA
1038 Brooklyn	BO
1039 Scotch Village	SV
1040 Mosherville	MO
1041 Stanley	
1045 Stanley Airport	
1047 Lowes	
1042 Clarksville	CS
1043 Midway	
1044 Kennetcook	KC
1046 Upper Kennetcook	
1048 Doddridge	
1049 Burtons	
1050 Hayes	
1052 South Maitland	MA
1053 Green Oaks	
1055 Princeport Road	
1057 Clifton	

It can be seen from this list that Halifax had a number of telegraph stations. Telegraph lines ran into the city from the South Shore and also from Truro. The only detail I was able to locate was that Halifax had two main stations serving these lines as follow:

Halifax HX was the Wire Chief and handled any technical requirements.

Halifax AX was the Commercial Station and handled the routine message traffic.

There must have been some connection with Dartmouth and the line that ran out to Musquodobit.

The two earliest railroad lines in Nova Scotia were the ones stretching from Halifax to Windsor and from Halifax to Truro. Construction commenced in 1848 and these lines opened for service in 1857. Because of the bridges required in the Bear River area, it was not until the summer of 1891 that a railroad train was able to run from Halifax through to Yarmouth.

The construction of these bridges was quite an engineering feat. They were constructed in wood until technology advanced to the point the wooden bridges were replaced with steel several years later. These bridges had to be constructed with a swinging centre so that they could open and let the many sailing vessels go up and down these rivers. There were a lot of these bridges throughout the province of Nova Scotia and the majority had openings for the use of sailing vessels. Three of these bridges were across the Sissiboo River at Weymouth, the Moose River at Clementsport and the one across the Bear River.



Public Archives Nova Scotia

This is an early railroad bridge near Kentville, Nova Scotia, about 1900. This bridge is much smaller than those required for this railroad around Bear River.

The telegraph code used over the landline telegraph for its 120 years (in Nova Scotia) was the revised Morse code of 1844 and this was known by many as the American Code.

A dash was equal to three dots. The space between parts of the same letter was equal to one dot. The letters and punctuation with double characters had a space equal to three dots between the characters. The space between two letters was equal to three dots. The space between two words was equal to seven dots. The L was a longer dash than the T and the zero was a longer dash than the L.



Canadian Pacific 7040

This is the Canadian Pacific Railway Station Agent sending a telegraph message at Pendleton, Ontario.

Various organizations and people hired their own personal telegraphist during the heyday of the telegraph. For example, if an important political figure held a meeting at some small town he would take along a telegraphist as a member of his party. When this person had a message or press bulletin to send back to his office or the major newspaper of his area, this telegraphist would take it to the nearest telegraph office and take over the operation of the telegraph. He would have the Wire Chief on this line connect him as near as possible to the office of destination – on occasion direct into this office. These telegraphists were some of the best available and could send fast clear code. The terminus operator would be of a similar caliber. These two were capable of passing lengthy messages as fast as possible and the company which owned the lines involved would receive a fee for the time the lines were in use. This was a rather prestigious and most interesting position.



Canadian Pacific M5276 – photographer N. Morant

This is the Canadian Pacific Railway Station Agent, R. Lefebvre, receiving a message via landline telegraph at Hudson, Quebec, 1950.

Many private companies were sufficiently large to hire their own telegraphist and have their own company telegraph line. These were mainly the large mining, lumbering, and fishing companies. The largest users of

telegraph on an individual scale would have been the various armies of the different nations around the world. Most armies used landline telegraph for several years after World War II.

The Camperdown Signal Station opened as a military project and retained that distinction until a few signalmen from the Royal Canadian Regiment of the Canadian Army were removed in the early 1920's. This makes it very difficult to find records of its activity and therefore little is known of the actual events taking place on the site. I was unable to learn if telegraph had been installed by the Army and I know very little of the operation of heliograph from the site.

THE FIRST SETTLERS

One must try to understand the whole of the history of the area in order to understand the history of communications; it is all so very much interconnected. Although I do not know as much of this history as I would like, there are a number of things that appear to stand out.

One thing is rather obvious, that as soon as the European or white settlers started arriving, they began constructing their own vessels out of the timber readily available from the vast forests covering the area. Naturally these forests had to be removed to produce the farms so necessary in order for the new settlers to survive. These forests not only produced the ships, but the actual buildings to protect these settlers and their possessions, plus the fuel to heat their dwellings during the long winters, which are as much a part of this country as the land itself. The things that are moved by motorized vehicle today would have been carried by boat until some time after World War I. Therefore, lighthouses, buoys, fog signals, and the coastal signal stations became necessary.

Wars have brought about great changes in our societies throughout the years. People seem as though they are at their best in making changes when trying to kill each other. If any good comes from these changes, it normally appears during or soon after a war. The first Thrum Cap Station was constructed in 1762. The Chappes designed their first Signal Stations during the Napoleonic wars in which France and England were directly involved. The British attempted to equal or improve upon this signaling system. The reason the Duke of Kent went about changing the installations so vigorously around this area was he expected another war with France. There are records which show another but minor problem the Duke of Kent had in establishing his signal stations throughout Nova Scotia. Occasionally those posted on a station next to the coast deserted as a complete unit to an American vessel that came close by, leaving no one at the station. Then there was the skirmish between Britain and the United States during the first part of the century, the war of 1812. There was the civil war in the United States during the 1860's and a number of Nova Scotians fought on each side in this war. There have been Canadians, both French and English, who have fought with and for the Americans in every war they have had to date. Men from this area fought in the Boer War in South Africa from 1899 to 1902. But, during the 1800's we, in this area, were rather fortunate that all was relatively quiet. All these incidents mentioned affected the local communications somewhat, but because there was no direct involvement, nothing outstanding took place.

Another point I have found most interesting. Since I do know that I am a descendant of the English speaking section of these settlers going back to the very first to arrive, is that the English settlers were different from the French. Different in the fact they remained by themselves and did not mix with the native Micmac Indian or the French who preceded them. Within the last few years the Micmac first nation Indian tribe changed the spelling of their name to Mi'kmaq. The French readily intermarried with the Indians. As soon as they arrived, the French Priests converted the Indians to their Catholic religion.

This history is more intriguing to me because of the fact my wife is a descendant of the Acadian French who were expelled by the English in 1755. When these French families returned to Nova Scotia they formed a colony along the shore of St. Mary's Bay, stretching from Weymouth to Yarmouth. From the first they have been known and respected for their honesty and fair play. For example, until a proper postal service was installed in the province, it is a well-known fact, that if anyone wanted to send a letter from Digby to Yarmouth, he merely gave it to the first of these French residents he met. Delivery was guaranteed.

The interconnection or the crossing of the English French line, with my wife's family, did not take place until the time of her father and mother. Religion played a very important part of the day-to-day life of early Nova Scotia, much more than it does today. I consider this fact as the main issue involved in this segregation. The French were strong or totally Catholic, whereas the English were Protestant, two sects much opposed to each other.

Having eleven living Grandparents when I was born, I was very fortunate to know many from my family tree. It seems to me rather strange that more intermingling did not occur. They were a good cross-section with all the peculiarities associated with human-type beings. Realizing this and knowing little has changed since the world began it is rather odd that with these, so few in such a small area, there was very little cross-cultural communication.

THE ACADIAN FLAG

There is another point connected with this subject that is of interest. Although these French descendants are much the same today as they have been for over two hundred years, some appear more militant towards the English. At least this seems more obvious now than at any time previous. The fact I find more interesting is that they chose a flag in 1884 that is now displayed regularly. Instead of choosing something containing the flower of the lily (fleur-de-lis) they chose the current French Flag; the red, white, and blue tri-colour with the addition of a yellow star in the canton.

Acadian is the name given these first French settlers, a mistake on their part. They found the Micmac Indians using a word sounding like AK-A-DE, which translated "place of", and thought it was the name these people called their country. Therefore this became Acadia and these people became French Acadians. At least this is one of several theories I have seen. Why these Acadians chose this flag is a mystery, their French connection was severed 43 years before France adopted this flag. I could easily understand their flag containing the flower of the lily, but possibly this falls into the same category as that of Newfoundland adopting the actual flag of Great Britain as her provincial flag for many years.

If I have interpreted this history correctly, France had made it a tradition to totally ignore these people, so why they would want a flag signifying any close union to such a so-called mother country is beyond me. I can understand them, to a point, wanting to retain their language, religion customs, culture, and so on. But, if France had shown any sympathy towards these people, there are several times she would have stepped in and done more to help them. One time was right after the expulsion in 1755. Those that were expelled, on reaching the colonies that now make up a part of the United States, were treated and lived as perhaps the lowest animals on earth. When they could tolerate this no longer, they did not create any real disturbance or mischief; they merely elected certain among them as their spokesmen, who cleaned themselves up, as best they could, and approached the proper authorities for help. One hell of a price to have to pay for the misdeeds of a few of their so-called leaders, mainly one priest who was alleged to have been a mental case, but had instigated the Micmac Indians into making blood curdling raids on the English settlements. Then again, maybe a French Catholic is not permitted to question the actions of his priests or the actions of his mother country. This priest was from France and it is very hard to understand this today and a lot of the problem appears to be the Acadian people. There were no Acadian priests, Acadian nuns as nursing sisters, teachers and so on. There was no Acadian army to protect their people and their country. If they had these people the British would have had something to negotiate an agreement or settlement and the history today would be quite different.

There are several groups or areas that now contain remnants of these Acadian French. One is the State of Louisiana that has the main body of those expelled to the American colonies. Another is along the shore of St. Mary's Bay stretching between Weymouth and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, where live descendants of those who hid in Nova Scotia after the expulsion. Another area is along the northeastern portion of the province of New Brunswick in the area of Shippegan and Caraquet, where live the descendants of those who returned from the American colonies after the expulsion. Still another two areas are the western portion of the province of Prince Edward Island and the area of Arichat on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.



These flags are from the Acadian/Cajun Genealogy Web Site

LOUISIANA ACADIANS

Many of the Acadian French who were expelled in 1755 made their way eventually to the present state of Louisiana. Recently there has been a restoration of interest in retaining their French language and customs in this area. For many years these people have been known as “Cajuns” and the area they call home in Louisiana is now known as Acadiana. With this recent interest on their part in retaining their French identity, they have designed their own flag. This flag is the one that makes the most sense (to me) for these Acadian French.

Thomas J. Arceneaux, the former dean of agriculture at the University of Southern Louisiana, designed this flag. The flag consists of three main parts: a white equilateral triangle at the hoist, and two horizontal bars on the fly, the top bar royal blue and the bottom one red. The upper side of the triangle is the hoist end of the blue bar and the lower side is the hoist end of the red bar.

In the center of the white triangle is the yellow Our Lady of the Assumption Star. Three white fleur-de-lis the flower of the lily of Bourbon, France are on the blue bar and a yellow castle, the Tower of Castile of Spain is on the red bar. This is, I think, a most appropriate flag for the Acadian French.

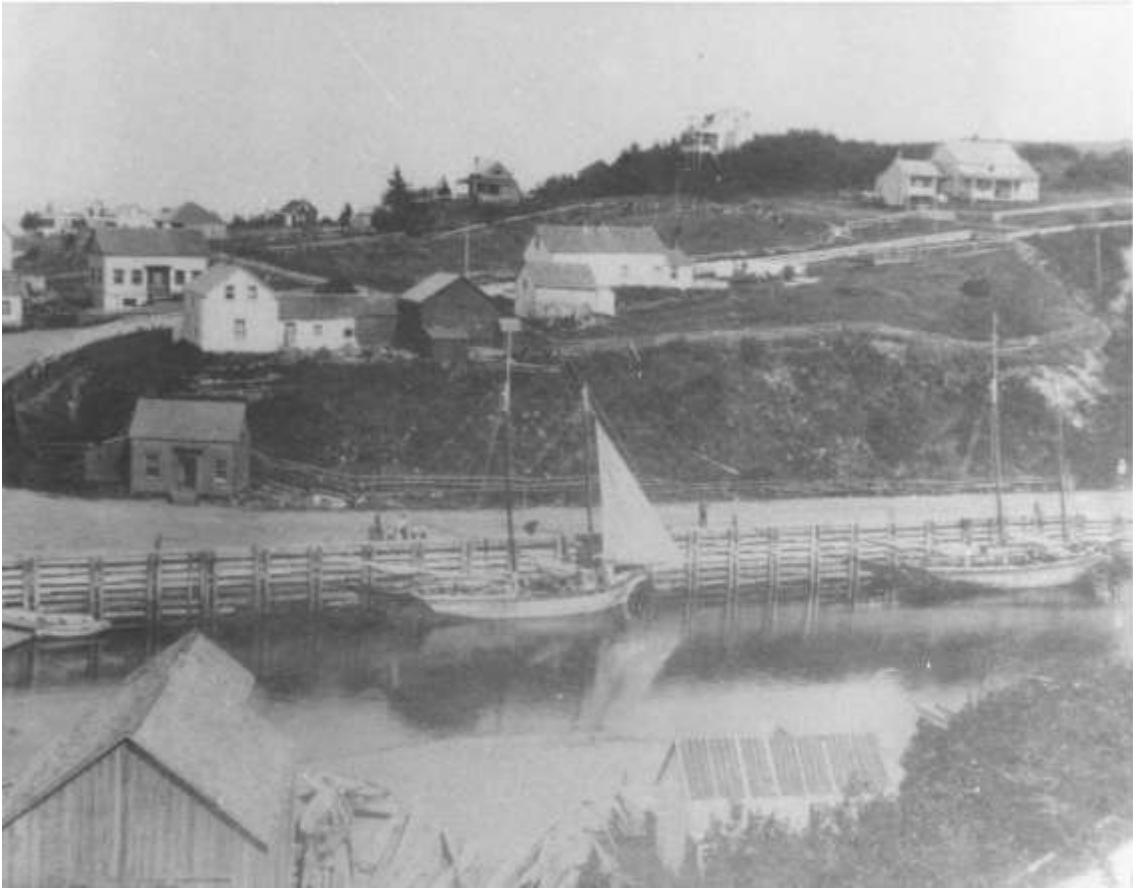
THE QUEBEC FLAG

Other than the odd bit of inter-marriage, my wife’s Grandmother being one example, Quebec and the French of that area have remained separate from these Acadian French and were not involved with the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755. The people of Quebec adopted their flag, which is the provincial flag (of the province) in 1948. This is a blue flag containing a Greek or St. George’s cross in white. This cross stands for the cross left on Quebec’s soil by Jacques Cartier, who discovered the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1534. Within each of the four rectangles created by this cross is one white fleur-de-lis. This is a much more appropriate flag for French-Canadians than the Acadian flag of this area who had their association with France terminated in 1758, thirty-one years prior to France adopting their tri-colour flag in 1789.



THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN SHIPS

Ships have played a big part of the history of Nova Scotia. The most common of these vessels were small and were used much the same as the family automobile is today. They were used for everything from fishing and hauling various cargoes to a family’s afternoon outing or picnic. There still are fishing and pleasure craft around that have been built from the knowledge gained through these early sailing vessels. But up until the first half of this century the coast was literally alive with these little sailing boats, the more common being small schooners and shallops.



Graham Hardy

This is Hall's Harbour, Nova Scotia about 1900 and these are typical two masted schooners that were so plentiful around the coast of Nova Scotia for many years.



Graham Hardy

This is Hall's Harbour, Nova Scotia, about 1900 and one can see where the two photographs were joined at one time. The Lighthouse is the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society's number CAN614.

It was during the twenty years from 1860 to 1880 that the shipbuilding industry reached its peak in Nova Scotia. Many of these ships were sold in the United Kingdom and many were built especially for overseas buyers. Some of the names assigned to these early ships can be seen on ships of Britain's present merchant fleet because some companies use the same names over and over as their ships are replaced.

I have been unable to locate a ship that flew the Nova Scotia flag as a signal of the vessel's registry prior to the forming of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. This particular flag was granted by royal charter and first flown in 1621, and is the provincial flag of the province to this day. These ships were of British registry and flew the flag as though registered in Britain. They were known as British North American ships and more commonly abbreviated to the initials, thus a BNA ship.



The flag of the province of Nova Scotia

The records indicate that there was a difference in these sailing ships much the same as there is today. The owners of the particular ship dictated or determined the quality of the material, design, and comfort found in the ship.

A merchant ship not only has to pay her own way she has to show a profit of some form to her owners in order to justify her existence. Therefore the world economic situation determined life in these older ships, just as much as it does today. In other words, if the times are economically good, there is lots of work for a merchant ship and she will be kept busy. On the other hand if the times are economically bad, there is little work and the ships that continue to work do so at less profit and are considered lucky to be still working. During these times some ships are laid up for want of work. What this means in terms of conditions is that during the good times everyone is working. During the bad times some are left unemployed and therefore only the best are hired and they have to produce at their best or they know they will soon be replaced. If the merchant ship has had no trouble in hiring a good crew, she is likely to go about her day to day routine with everything running smoothly. But if times are economically good and the merchant ship has had trouble in hiring a crew, she is taking what she can find, and in this case all hell can cut loose.

A good example of this was during the 1880's. Times were economically good and therefore merchant ships were having trouble in locating good crews. The practice then was to hire the crew for the movement of the ship. In other words, while the ship was loading or discharging her cargo, which would take some time compared with today's standards, the crew was paid off. Once the ship was ready to sail again another crew would be rounded up and hired. On occasion some of the lazy, unskilled, and so on, would find themselves in a BNA ship.

A BNA officer was not one to put up with anything but the best of anyone in his ship. If a certain individual was not up to his expectations he would revert to a good old-fashioned cuffing, better understood by its proper term a boot in the ass, if need be.

Great Grandfather George Sydney Spicer lost a cousin through these circumstances. Daniel Spicer was the Mate, with another cousin, Captain George Dimock Spicer in the full rigged ship E. J. SPICER (1268 tons built at Spencers Island, Nova Scotia, 1880). This ship had been named for Captain Spicer's wife, the former Emily Jane Morris. As can be seen the descendants of Loyalist Robert Spicer were prominent in all areas of Nova Scotia's wind driven fleet.

On August 4th, 1882, while the E. J. SPICER was at anchor in New York and getting ready to sail for England, Dan Spicer gave some orders to an Irish seaman. The seaman apparently gave Dan more lip than action so Dan went after him, in order to straighten the guy out at the beginning of the voyage where it counted. A fight quickly developed. The seaman grabbed the capstan bar. Dan managed to wrestle the bar from him and as he did so the seaman grabbed his knife, stabbed Dan in the chest killing him instantly. At the time Dan was not yet thirty, a fairly big man around six feet tall, and had recently been married. He had just seen his wife off for her trip back home to Nova Scotia, after visiting with him while they were in New York. This incident was to make the vessel well known, but shortly after another large American vessel was to be involved in a similar incident.

The year before this distressing incident, Captain Spicer had made some excellent trips with the E. J. SPICER. He sailed from Norfolk, Virginia, on January 14th, 1881, and arrived in Liverpool on February 4th, making the trip in twenty days. He made the round voyage from Norfolk to Liverpool and back to New York, including time spent in port, in the fast time of 58 days.

Captain George Spicer was to retire from a sea-going career spanning a period of 52 years. If this incident involving Dan did not leave him with recurring nightmares, another would. In 1898, while off Luzon in the China Sea, he saw his son washed off the jib boom during a storm. He was unable to do a thing about it. His son was lost and only 18 years old.

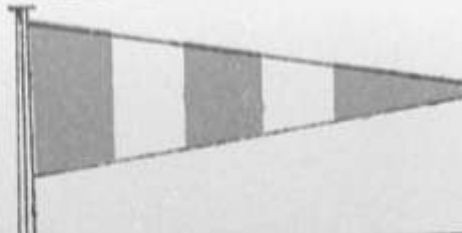
When we think in terms of ships today, we naturally think of these old sailing ships as much larger than they actually were. The sails of course made them look a lot larger, but the largest of these ships was around 2,000 gross tons a hundred years ago. For example the figure of 1600 gross tons was the magic figure in that a ship measuring that size or larger had to be fitted with a radio station and carry a Radio Officer when engaged in foreign voyages. Therefore few of these old sailing vessels would meet this requirement, although the first laws governing the compulsory fitting of radio or wireless read much differently, which will be explained later.

THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SIGNALS

Looking back on some of the statements left by some of the earliest committees appointed to look after the International Code of Signals, one gets the impression they are practically admitting defeat to Captain Marryat's Code of Signals. His code remained the more popular for some time after the first International Code of Signals. It was soon apparent the 1857 International Code of Signals was very inadequate. Although this code only contained eighteen flags it did constitute 70,000 codes, much too complex to record here. Therefore the committee appointed for this purpose, sifted through the many suggestions it received for improvements to this code. One of the main suggestions was from France wanting the letter X and Z included in the Alphabet. In the end, the committee decided to rewrite the whole code and came up with a complete alphabet containing a flag for each of the 26 letters in the alphabet. This, of course, meant that there were now 26 flags instead of the 18 of the old code, and meant that the old four-letter codes could be terminated and that many of the three-letter codes could be reduced to two. This naturally meant less chance of error in both reading and bending the necessary flags on to make a hoist. This became the first major change in the International Code of Signals and once approval was given by all the various maritime nations involved it came into force on January 1st, 1902.

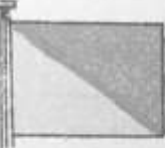
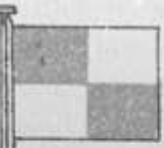


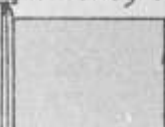







SPECIAL FLAGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CODE

Code Flag
and
Answering Pennant.



Red and White
Stripes, Vertically,
Red at Mast.

<p>A</p>	<p>Burgee, White and Blue, divided vertically. Blue half Swallow-tailed.</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>Square Flag, White and Red, divided vertically. White at Mast.</p>
<p>B</p> <p><i>The Powder Flag</i></p>	<p>Burgee, Red Swallow-tailed.</p>	<p>I</p>	<p>Square Flag, Yellow, with Black ball in centre.</p>
<p>C</p> <p><i>Affirmative "YES"</i></p>	<p>Pennant, White, with Red Ball near Mast.</p>	<p>J</p>	<p>Square Flag, Blue, White, Blue, divided horizontally.</p>
<p>D</p> <p><i>Negative, "NO"</i></p>	<p>Pennant, Blue, with White Ball near Mast.</p>	<p>K</p>	<p>Square Flag, Yellow and Blue, divided vertically. Yellow at Mast.</p>
<p>E</p>	<p>Pennant, Tricolour, Red, White, Blue, divided vertically, Red at Mast.</p>	<p>L</p> <p><i>Cholera, Yellow Fever, or Plague Flag.</i></p>	<p>Square Flag, Yellow and Black, quartered. Yellow at Mast.</p>
<p>F</p>	<p>Pennant, Red, with White St. George's Cross.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Square Flag, Blue, with White St. Andrew's Cross.</p>
<p>G</p>	<p>Pennant, Yellow and Blue, Vertically. Yellow at Mast.</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Square Flag, Blue and White, Chequered. 16 Squares. Blue at Mast.</p>

O		Square Flag, Yellow and Red, divided Diagonally Yellow at Mast.	U		Square Flag, Red and White, quartered. Red at Hoist.
<i>The Blue Peter</i> P		Square Flag, Blue, with White Square in centre.	V		Square Flag, White, with Red St. Andrew's Cross.
<i>"Am about to Sail"</i> <i>Quarantine Flag Foreign</i> Q		Square Flag Yellow.	W		Square Flag, White, with Broad Blue Border and Red Square in centre.
<i>"Am Liable to Quarantine"</i> R		Square Flag, Red, with Yellow St. George's Cross.	X		Square Flag, White, with Blue St. George's Cross.
<i>Pilot Signal</i> S		Square Flag, White, with Blue Square in centre.	Y		Square Flag, 5 Yellow and 5 Red Bars, Diagonally. Yellow at Hoist.
<i>"Want a Pilot"</i> T		Square Flag, Tricolour, Red, White, Blue. Red at Mast, Blue at Fly.	Z		Square Flag, Black, Yellow, Blue, Red, quartered Diagonally. Black at Mast, Blue at Fly, Yellow at top, Red at foot.

These are the flags and pennants making up the International Code of Signals that went in service in 1901.

The major point concerning this code, which is rather noticeable, is that there was no provision made for hoisting figures, and this code did contain an additional pennant known as the code flag that was also used as the answering pennant. Numeral signals were signaled with a prearranged code as follows:

Code Flag over Flag M meant that the signal that follows is from the Numeral Table.

The Numeral Table was rather interesting. Flags for the Alphabet from A to K meant, as one would expect, the digits from 1 to 11 inclusive. Then it changed as follows:

L = 22
M = 33
N = 44
O = 55
P = 66

Q = 77
R = 88
S = 99
T = 100
U = 0
V = 00
W = 000
X = 0000
Y = 00000
Z = 000000

There are two other prearranged codes that had to be kept in mind. Code Flag over Flag N indicated the decimal point. Code Flag over Flag O meant that the numeral code had ended.

A couple of examples are now necessary to explain this in more detail. To make the numeral or figure group 78700 it would be done as follows:

1st hoist Code Flag over M (the signals which follow are numeral signals)
2nd hoist G H 78
3rd hoist G V 700
4th hoist Code Flag over O (numeral signals are ended)

Again, to make the numeral or figure group 9.99876 it would be done as follows:

1st hoist Code Flag over M (the signals which follow are numeral signals)
2nd hoist I 9
3rd hoist Code Flag over N (the decimal point)
4th hoist S H G F 99876
5th hoist Code Flag over O (the numeral signals are ended)

All very interesting, but this code is the one which could not stand the rigor of the signal requirements of World War I, which has been mentioned in many texts dealing with that war in detail. This 26 flag alphabet code, it should be noted, was identical to our present Alphabet Code with the exception that the pennants for the letters C, D, E, F, and G are now our numeral pennants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. This meant another major change in the International Code of Signals that will be explained later.

CODE FLAG		AND ANSWERING PENDANT			
A		B		C	
D		E		F	
G		H		I	
J		K		L	
M		N		O	
P		Q		R	
S		T		U	
V		W		X	
Y		Z			

NUMERAL PENDANTS.

1		2		3	
4		5		6	
7		8		9	
0					

SUBSTITUTES.

FIRST SUBSTITUTE		SECOND SUBSTITUTE		THIRD SUBSTITUTE	
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John Rae VE1AGN from Brown's Signal Book 1944

These are the flags making up the current International Code of Signals that went in service in 1930. Note the changes between this and those of the 1901 Code.

November 1, 2007

This is the Fourth Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

SILVER LEAF

Anyone would be hard pressed to find a cove, harbour, creek, or whatever, around the coast of Nova Scotia that did not give birth to a vessel of some description. It was a common statement during the days of sail to hear someone state, on referring to a strange vessel that she probably comes from a Nova Scotia creek. Launching day, for a new ship, was treated as a common holiday. The schools, shops, and so on, would close and people for miles around would gather for the launching, making a real picnic of the affair. The ship to be launched was more than likely all ready for her first voyage, complete with sails, crew, food, and so on. Many were even filled with their first cargo, mostly lumber to be shipped to various ports around the world. Quite often the Captain would have sufficient power to sail, trade, and whatever, the way he saw fit. This would include selling the ship if he felt it would warrant the best interest of the owners.



Warren E. Hagar

This is a three masted tern schooner so common around Nova Scotia.

All of these ships were equipped with the latest signal flags and were using them according to the date and time they were in service. They all were registered properly and were assigned a proper signal code call and recorded accordingly. The Signal Code Calls were shown on their papers of registry that also showed the exact way they were to be flown. On launching, these ships were well decked out in these signal flags. This is still the practice. It is interesting to note that in many cases instead of a particular ship using her actual code call, she flew a plain flag with the name of the ship sewn on same as it appeared on her bows and stern. Normally this flag was flown from a very conspicuous spot on a mast and quite often from the top of the mizzenmast. Overall they made a most colourful sight. Many ships were painted all white with black trim and did not change colour until several years of service, then had their hulls painted a dark shade of blue, green, and quite often black, to cover the scars of use. Some were to enter service with their hulls the dark colour from the beginning.

A type of vessel that became very popular around the Nova Scotia Coast was known as the tern schooner. The tern was the last of these sailing ships and some were still around during World War II.



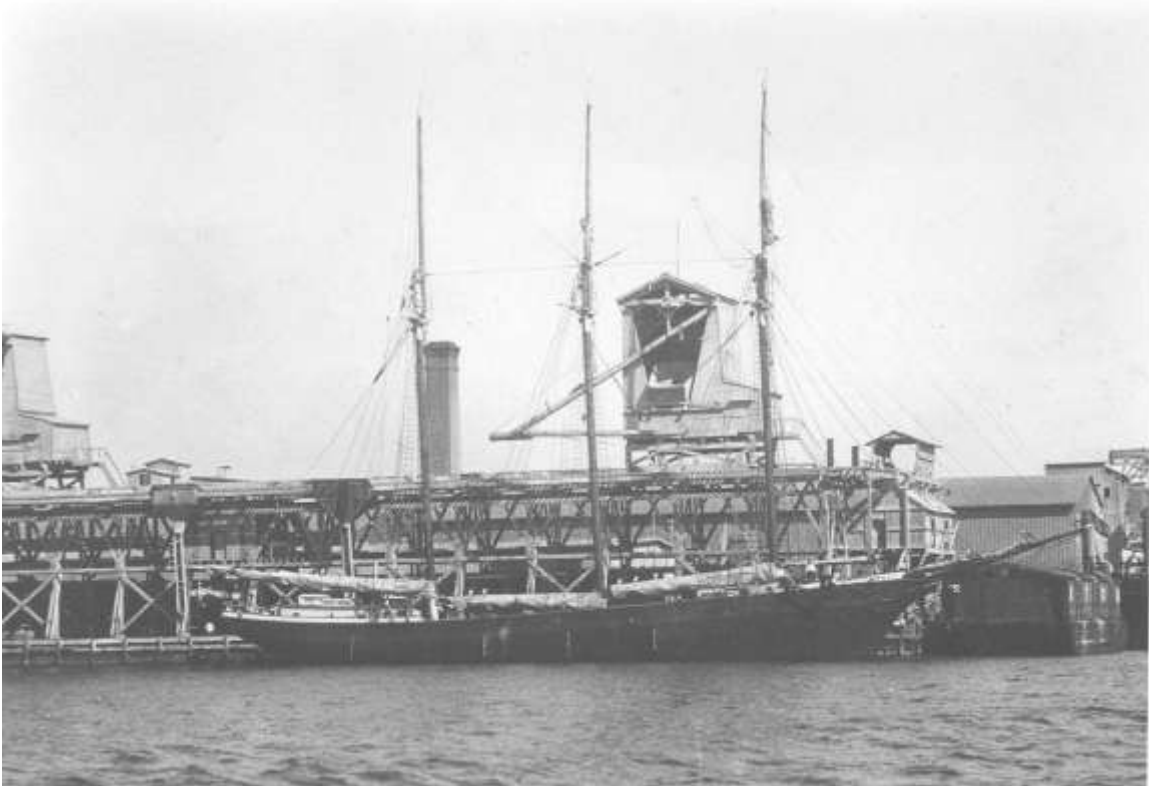
Warren E. Hagar

This is a four masted tern schooner, not common but not un-common around the Nova Scotia coast.

I am not certain why I was born with so many living Grandparents, other than I was the oldest of the oldest, going back for a generation or two. I guess the main reason there were so many was the simple fact they all enjoyed life so much that they did not realize it was time to quit. They were a wonderful bunch for a kid to grow up with. One whom I enjoyed very much was my Great-grandfather George Sydney Spicer. He was my father's Mother's father and he lived until I was twenty-three years old. As can be seen, he and I spent much time together, an opportunity few people ever get. He was in his nineties when he died and had been quite active up until that time. He had spent a good portion of his life at sea and his are the stories I remember most.

I remember asking him which of the vessels in which he sailed was the one he liked most, after one of the many trips we made with Grandfather Spicer. This was most likely the usual run to the West Indies and back, complete with a storm, sickness, everything to keep us wide-eyed and speechless. He named this one for the very reasons I look back on some of mine more fondly than the others. He had sailed in so many that had nothing but visual means of communication, I decided to see if one of them would not be appropriate to use in this project. When I started this, I did not know that the one Grandfather named was relatively famous, although relatively unknown outside of the Maritime Provinces of Canada. This was the tern schooner SILVER LEAF. One of the reasons he considered this his favourite is that he enjoyed sailing with her Captain, Captain Charles Salter.

SILVER LEAF was built at Spencers Island, Nova Scotia, Grandfather Spicer's home village, by Johnson Spicer another relative and another descendant of Loyalist Robert Spicer. SILVER LEAF, launched on May 27th, 1903, was 130 feet in length with a registered tonnage of 283 tons. This would make her a rather small vessel today, but at that time she was what one could call an average size. Being a tern schooner meant that all her sails were rigged fore and aft, running parallel to the hull of the vessel, and that she had three masts. Occasionally one of these terns would have one square sail, the exception and not the rule. Also, on occasion one would have four masts or more.



L. S. Salter

This is the tern schooner **SILVER LEAF** alongside a dock and it is a bit hard to make out the ship.

SILVER LEAF was launched in 1903. This meant that she entered service just as wireless was making an appearance and her only means of communication was visual. She would have been using the International Code of Signals for 1903, the one that entered service on January 1st, 1902. This was a document in the form of a hard covered book eleven inches high by nine inches wide and two inches thick. A copy of the registration for **SILVER LEAF** lists her signal code as TQMF. It also indicates how it is to be flown, in a vertical line commencing with the T at the top and terminating with the F at the bottom.

When **SILVER LEAF** was launched she was a typical wooden vessel, one requiring men of iron as has been said many times. She was completely wood and manpower. There was nothing but manpower to wrestle with her lines, sails, anchors, and so forth. She was to have a routine career but one must admit a most interesting one by today's standards. Grandfather Spicer told me that she was a very pretty vessel painted all white with a bit of black trim. I managed to locate Captain Salter's son who loaned me a photo of her alongside a dock. As can be seen in this photo she has a black hull. This certainly does not make Grandfather erroneous in any way. This means he must have referred to her when she was relatively new. There are so many of us who were raised on Grandfather Spicer stories, that if I took the time to canvass the whole family for same, I could no doubt come up with most of his career in **SILVER LEAF**.

My father's mother remembered being on this vessel with her father. Captain Salter often had female members of his family with him. Grandmother was aboard while **SILVER LEAF** was at Canning, Nova Scotia. Captain Salter had his sister with him on this particular trip. The thing that Grandmother remembered, more than anything else, was the lovely Ivy plant growing around the bulkhead in the Captain's cabin.

The majority of these wooden sailing ships had two houses. The one forward normally housed the crew, galley, cook, carpenter, carpenter shop, and so on, with their necessary equipment for running the ship. The house aft, or on the after part of the ship, housed the Captain, Officers' dining saloon (meals were carried aft from the galley), normally all the officers including the steward, if one was carried, plus their washroom

and possibly an office and storeroom. The actual layout of these cabins varied a great deal from one ship to another. The ship's wheel was just behind this aft house on the open deck. These ships were by now carrying at least one good magnetic compass and the normal position for this compass was mounted inside the aft house, with a window so the compass was visible to the helmsman at the wheel outside this house. There was also room for a candle or lantern in order to see the compass during the hours of darkness. It was also mandatory for these vessels to show lights at night, and these of course had to be displayed with lanterns, a red light on the port or left side, a green light on the starboard or right side, and a white light on the stern. Various lights were and are used to signify; either a sailing or motor ship and still further the type of ship for certain cases, such as the pilot boat, dangerous cargoes, fishing vessels, and so on.

The mirror sextant, which greatly improved the accuracy of navigation, had been invented in 1730. These sextants were not only mandatory they were the main piece of navigational equipment in obtaining the ship's position.

The first logs used for measuring the speed of the ship through the water were simply a piece of wood attached to a long line. One of the officers would stand next to the rail with an hourglass and a seaman or two would pay out this line until the hourglass ran out. By measuring the length of line paid out they were able to calculate the speed of the vessel.

Another item used for navigation was the lead line. This has been used since man first ventured out in ships. This is a line with a weight on one end and is used to measure the depth of the water below the ship. These sailing ships had two lines for this purpose: one of 100 fathoms known as the Deep Sea Line, the other of 22 fathoms known as the Shore Line. The depth of water was recorded on their navigational charts and by knowing this depth it was used as a navigational aid.

Naturally they needed to know the correct time especially when using the sextant. Before the invention of radio and time signals by radio, this presented a very real problem. The ship normally carried a chronometer. This was protected very carefully in a special case normally built into the chart table. These chronometers, when necessary, were taken ashore, cleaned, calibrated, and in general given necessary maintenance to ensure as much accuracy as possible.

These were the only navigational aids available at that date and time and their general accuracy depended on the quality of the crew. On occasion only the Captain was capable of using a sextant and his knowledge was often limited. The emphasis on training was not very good. Some of the old BNA officers sailed on knowledge gained solely from a course given on navigation by a common school teacher, but none the less, did an excellent job of taking these ships around the world.

Having had the pleasure of sailing with a few of the seamen that had started in the last of these sailing ships, I learned of a most interesting piece of equipment. While talking with one he mentioned that these old Captains with whom he sailed always carried a shotgun. I started to laugh and said, "They must have really expected a riot to carry something that big for self-protection". He said, "It wasn't for protection, it was to knock down the water spouts you see down south a lot". Since I became rather intrigued with this bit of knowledge, I asked him how big a hole he had seen these old boys blow through one of those waterspouts. He claimed the shot had nothing to do with it and it was the sound of the shotgun discharging that broke them up, although he could not say how efficient it was. I do believe that it all boiled down to the fact they had little or nothing to go by and anything including the heaving of the "honey-bucket" at such things was considered a help, whether physically or psychologically. It was a fact that these waterspouts and associated squalls could do a lot of damage to the ships especially during the hours of darkness.

Captain Salter's wife sailed many times with him in SILVER LEAF, and during one voyage on the way back from the West Indies while she was with him, they got caught in a very bad storm. This did much damage to the sails and the masts and they had a pretty bad time of it for awhile. At one point they had nine feet of water in the hold which broke up the cargo of molasses. They managed to limp into Baltimore and obtain repairs before proceeding north and home. Another time when going south with a cargo of potatoes they were becalmed for thirty days and ran out of food. They spent the last part of this voyage living on

potatoes from the cargo and any fish they caught. As can be seen the SILVER LEAF had a most interesting career, by today's standards, but her voyages were much the same as any other of these sailing ships.

Captain Salter and Great grandfather Spicer had left SILVER LEAF previous to her last voyage in 1918. After about seven years service it was usually more economical to sell these schooners. Captain Salter did not sell out his shares until July 17th, 1917, at which time she was fourteen years old, just double the normal age. This indicates SILVER LEAF was one of the better tern schooners, and had it not been for an accident, she probably would have given practical service for many more years.

On SILVER LEAF's last voyage she loaded a cargo of lumber at Saint John, New Brunswick, and was to deliver this cargo to Cape Town, South Africa. She had been leaking badly so just previous to starting out on this voyage her first and only motor driven pumps were installed. After leaving Saint John she was becalmed for sometime. When nearing Barbados, it was decided to put in there and have her bottom cleaned that had been fouled through such a long period of becalming. In this condition she was hard to manage and was wrecked on the reefs off South Point Lighthouse, Barbados, on September 29th, 1918. The SILVER LEAF was lost but the crew and lumber cargo were saved. Practically every publication I have read on these old sailing ships, mentions the SILVER LEAF. Around the Bay of Fundy, she was a household word until long after she was gone.



Robert Owen Wilcoxon

This is the wreck of the Sailing Vessel SILVER LEAF.

When the weather is not good, no vessel is comfortable, but when the weather was fairly good, these vessels must have been comfortable ships in which to sail. There were no engines and no radio with the latest agony of a hit tune, and better yet, no way for the owners and agents to bother the crews. It must have been a most relaxing way to go to sea, no noise, no vibration, just the gentle motion of the ship with only the squeaking of the rigging, the sound of the wind, and the sea hissing along the hull. Can you picture SILVER LEAF when she was new meeting you under full sail at sea and exchanging some flag hoists with you? First she would be most beautiful, all white with a bit of black trim, as Grandfather described her to me, under a full suit of white sails. The Canadian red ensign would be hoisted to her mizzen gaff or mizzen top on first meeting her. The Canadian red ensign was the Canadian flag for many years. It was identical to the plain red ensign flown by all British merchant ships, often called the "red duster", except it had the Canadian Coat of Arms on the fly. SILVER LEAF flew the Canadian red ensign flown from 1868 to 1921 that I will explain later.

SILVER LEAF, either under her ensign or next to it in clear view, would break her four-letter signal code call TQMF in a vertical line. By the term 'break' it means that all the flags are bent on a signal halyard, then hoisted to the top and with a quick jerk these flags break and fly free. The ensign is never hoisted this

way, but all signal hoists are. In other words, it is hard to notice anything – then all of a sudden you get a virtual explosion of colour. It is hard to believe these old merchant ships would break their signal hoists. The majority probably simply hoisted each signal and left the fancy breaking to the “Man O’War”, as the warship was known.

SILVER LEAF was a most beautiful sight and nothing at sea these days can compare. When you have read her signals made thus far, break your Answering Pennant. SILVER LEAF will then lower her TQMF hoist and break the following in this order:

- 1st. Port from which last sailed.
- 2nd. Destination.
- 3rd. Number of days out.
- 4th. Longitude.

The Answering Pennant and Code Flag were/are one and the same; a triangular pennant twice as long as the signal flags in use, consisting of vertical bars, three red separated by two white all of equal width.

For an example we will pretend we met Grandfather bound for Canning, Nova Scotia, with a cargo of molasses from Havana, Cuba. SILVER LEAF will fly code hoist AXNW, the code for Havana. When you fly your Answering Pennant she will replace this hoist with code hoist BCER, the code for Canning, Nova Scotia. If SILVER LEAF had departed Havana six days ago she would replace the BCER hoist with Code Flag under code UG. There were no flags for the figures and one had to fly these three flags in order to make the digit 6. At least this was the simplest way from the Section Code Flag Under Two Flags Numeral Table, rather than using the Section on Numeral Signals described in my last description of The International Code of Signals. If SILVER LEAF makes the Longitude 68 degrees west she will fly Code Flag over GB, from the Section Code Flag Over Two Flags. She would replace each hoist with the next once you answer her with your Answering Pennant each time. One would think that it was much easier to receive rather than transmit a message. One simply looked up each code as copied, whereas when one transmitted they would have to find the information and the proper code they wanted to convey. The Captain and a mate or two could be making these signals, which would make it easier than one working alone.

After this SILVER LEAF might make any communication she desired. Naturally the ship you are in is doing the same, but for those who could take the time to do nothing but enjoy the view, it would certainly be something to behold. The many signal flags would make additional colour to an already colourful sight. When SILVER LEAF had finished; she would likely fly hoist DJX, meaning adieu or farewell.

There were four types of stations listed in this Signal Book: An International Signal Station, A Time Signal Station, A Weather or Ice Signal Station and A Life Saving Station, and these stations are noted by a special sign alongside their four-letter code for their place name. Halifax, Nova Scotia, is listed as having a Life Saving Station (the one at Duncan’s Cove) and a Weather or Ice Signal Station. The Camperdown Signal Station must have supplied some weather signals of some description via a few flags or balls. One could not communicate to any office via this station, although this signal station would notify the station at Citadel Hill in Halifax that this vessel was inbound.

On occasion if the two ships knew each other and the weather permitted, they would stop and communicate by means of rowboats. On other occasions they would sail close to each other and communicate by the spoken word. The most colourful sight of all was when they met and happened to be going in the same direction. Invariably they would adjust the sails in order to obtain every ounce of speed. No one could resist a race and the race would be on. The only damage that could be caused from this was to have a mast carried away or a sail blown out. So common were these incidents that no one ashore would pay any attention to them, not so today. If the crews in these modern behemoths try to do a little racing, the office would fire them for the fuel they would waste. The best I have ever seen is to catch a sister ship advising the office of her ETA (estimated time of arrival). If she were headed for the same dock, as we were, I would give this ETA to my Captain who would adjust our ETA, if appropriate, a half-hour or so ahead of the other ship so we could have the dock first. If it did create any response from the other ship it would merely be in the form of the other Radio Officer tapping, wise guy, smart alec or some such mundane crack to me, and at

that he would never dare tap “smart ass” over the air. Some colour! Some exciting! One incident I do remember was when a sister ship caught my ETA. Her Captain sent his with a two-minute time difference trying to grab the dock ahead of us. When I showed this to my Captain he merely grunted and said, “Who the hell does he think he is?” and I doubt there was a sense of humour among the other crew, so I totally ignored the other operator, and let on I had never caught his ETA. We were already running, at our maximum revolutions on our old steam turbine percolator so there was nothing to do but wait for the word from the powers that be ashore. If I remember correctly we were odd man out and merely idled back to a dull movement and slid into the anchorage, dropped our hook (anchor), and waited our turn.

CANADIAN RED ENSIGN

Canada was the first of the British Colonies to gain a form of independence from the mother country, Great Britain, and this produced an incident worth mentioning. The BNA ships came under British rule, law, customs, traditions, and what have you. They were required to fly the red ensign as any other British registered, or flag ship. Around the time Canada was formed some of the crews of the BNA ships felt they should be entitled to something more than a plain old “red duster” flying from their ships. They therefore defaced their ensign with an assortment of paraphernalia, anything resembling something of Canada. This was more often than not, a maple leaf, a cluster of maple leaves, a beaver, or some such design, on the fly. This created quite a commotion among the powers that be back in the mother country. They were dead set against it and felt we colonials should be given a good lesson in proper flag etiquette. Surprisingly, the British officials here in the colony, as it was known, were in favour of this practice and actually assisted in same to the point of bringing about the Canadian Red Ensign, the red duster with the Canadian Coat of Arms on the fly.

There were actually several of these Canadian Red Ensigns. The first had the coats of arms of the first four provinces to form the Dominion of Canada and this ensign flew from 1868 until 1921. The Parliament Building in Ottawa first flew this ensign in 1904 when it replaced the British Union Flag better known as the Union Jack. The Canadian Coat of Arms with three green maple leaves flew from 1921 until 1957. Then from 1957 until 1965 the Canadian Ensign had the Canadian Coat of Arms with three red maple leaves and with a slight change in the Irish harp, and this was the Canadian flag or ensign until February 15th, 1965, when the Canadian red and white maple leaf flag was adopted as this country’s official flag.



Wikipedia

1868 – 1921



Wikipedia

1921 – 1957



Wikipedia

1957 – 1965



The flag of Canada since 10-AM local time February 15th, 1965.

I had worked the night shift at Teslin Aeradio, Teslin Yukon Territory but stayed up in order to replace this flag with the Canadian red ensign. I wanted to be one of the first to fly this flag. I was one of the first but one of the last because the Yukon was the last area in Canada to turn 10-AM local time. My wife recorded this event with our old 8mm home movie camera.

THE TELEPHONE

When the telegraph and telephone first went into service, a good many people became involved in many companies, to produce and operate these new gadgets. During the first years of their use they were owned, operated, sold, and maintained by many companies. Many of these first companies were amalgamated to form the companies we know today. Just as many went broke financially and disappeared without leaving any noticeable record of their existence. There were many financial wars between various forms of business to control the operation of these pieces of equipment. Therefore this installation rotated as much or more on the amount of money available as it did on the actual service it would provide to people in general.

To invent the telephone, telegraph, and later wireless telegraphy and make them functional was something but to sell same to the average person was something else. Several units, or even two, might be practical in an area but one unit by itself would be useless. Therefore the first telephones were purchased by fairly large organizations to use as an intercom between their various offices, homes, warehouses, and so on.

The late Mr. J. Furber Marshall, Historian/Archivist, Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company Limited stated:

“The telephone first came to Nova Scotia in August 1877 and over the next two years pairs of telephones appeared in various Nova Scotia communities as intercom systems between home and office, store and

warehouse, and the like. In the fall of 1879 a Toronto firm, the Dominion Telegraph Company, converted part of its Halifax network of telegraph lines into a telephone exchange. For the first time, Nova Scotia telephone users could ask an operator for a telephone connection. The rival Western Union Telegraph Company quickly followed with a competing exchange in Halifax.

In 1880 the Bell Telephone Company of Canada was formed and within the year they moved into Halifax and took over both telephone companies, those of the Dominion Telegraph Company and Western Union Telegraph Company. Bell operated in Nova Scotia for about seven years during which time the telephone became better known and businessmen from Cape Breton to Yarmouth, realizing its potential began organizing local and regional companies. By 1887, it was obvious that Bell was overextended and would not be making the investments in Nova Scotia necessary to provide a provincial network. This produced the incorporation of the Nova Scotia Telephone Company, and they began the consolidation of all the telephone companies in the province, a process which was not completed in 1910 when Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company was formed with even wider areas of consolidation in mind.

There is no known record of the Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company ever having used telegraph within its operations. When the Company was named, it was a practice to obtain as wide corporate powers as possible at the time of incorporation as a hedge against the telegraph companies later obtaining legal injunction against the telephone company's operations. Being first in the field of wire communications, the cable and telegraph companies were powerful enemies in the early days of the telephone business. Maritime Telegraph and Telephone have traditionally offered private wire telegraph services to allow their customers to communicate by key-and-sounder and teletypewriter, first on a private wire basis and more recently on a dial-up exchange basis (TWX). One technical reason in the earlier days was that a Morse leg could be superimposed on existing telephone circuits with little or no degradation to the voice path with little effort and expense. Further, these Morse Legs could be tandem-linked together through mechanical repeaters to cover great distances when voice transmission was limited through lack of the vacuum-tube amplifier."

Mel Saunders retired several years ago from a lifetime as a telegraph operator on the landline through the Annapolis Valley. His most distant direct contact was Calgary, Alberta. At the time Mel was operating at Windsor and had the Wire Chief of each line connect him direct to Calgary for some long messages he had been asked to deliver. He said he had a very good clear line all the way to Calgary and had no trouble delivering these long messages.



G. B. Roscoe

This is the Government Wharf at Kingsport, Nova Scotia shortly after a Cornwallis Valley Railroad train was able to back down on to this wharf. The CVR opened this line in 1890 and this photograph may have been taken as much as ten years later in 1900. This was the terminus of the railroad line from Kentville to Kingsport, where the trains met the small steam packets that landed passengers and freight from Saint John, New Brunswick. The one meeting this train could be the BRUNSWICK, but I was unable to identify either it or the tern schooner outbound. There is a ramp at this site in 2007 for launching boats.

Another good example of what Mr. Marshall states was the railroad from Kentville through Centreville to Weston and from Centreville in the other direction as far as the wharf at Kingsport, which has now disappeared. This line was constructed with horses and wagons, quite a feat when you look at some of the rough terrain that had to be filled and leveled. The line to Weston was constructed in 1913 and the various stations along the route were fitted with telegraph and the corresponding lines. A very severe snow and ice storm did much damage and destroyed these lines on December 13th, 1913. For some reason when these lines were repaired, they were used for telephones and not telegraph. Possibly the cost of renting this telephone intercom system was more attractive than hiring telegraph operators for this line. Most of the railway stations on this line had no agent for many of the years they were in operation. Any business was carried out with the conductor of the train involved. Centreville did have a telegraph and had call code CV. The Grafton station on this line had an emergency type telegraph key and sounder. This one was complete with long poles in order to attach this unit to the wires passing nearby without having to climb a telegraph pole.

During the time the telegraph was the main means of communication for the railroads and many of the villages these railroads served, the majority (if not all) of the various elements on these lines carried these emergency units. Many an incident took place for example where someone working on the tracks became injured. The Foreman of the job would then get out his sounder and key, climb up the closest telegraph pole and connect same. He then sent down the line the nature of his request (or requests) and could if need be alert the next train to stop and take the injured person to the closest medical centre. Naturally any request could be made over such a unit and most people in such positions knew enough of the operation in order to make this communication. Now this is handled by mobile radiotelephones and the cell phone has probably taken over a lot of this communication.

During the time the Grafton station and the others making up this railroad line were in service, if for any reason the telephone equipment became inoperative, communications could be established via telegraph over the same lines providing the lines were not totally disrupted because of a serious break.

Mr. Marshall continues:

“The earliest known telephone directory for the Camperdown area is that of May 1900. While it has no listings for any subscribers in this area, it does have toll rates covering Chebucto Head Lighthouse, Ferguson’s Cove, Sambro, and Herring Cove. This would indicate there was public service of some description in the area, probably what were called toll stations or in modern terminology, pay phones. The first reference to telephone services in Nova Scotia communities are the Station Statistics in the company magazine, starting in January 1908. There Sambro appears as an exchange in January 1908 with four telephones and steadily grows until, with the first Maritime Telegraph and Telephone directory, for 1911, list the Marconi Wireless Station at Camperdown, pay stations at Chebucto Head, Duncan’s Cove, Herring Cove, and Sambro, plus ten private telephones. There are no telephone numbers for any of them and the exchange Agent is listed as Mr. Brown, the manager at Halifax. This indicates that there really was no exchange at Sambro, merely a long party line out of the main Halifax exchange, St. Paul, on Salter Street at the head of Granville Street. This exchange existed from 1892 until 1916, and was replaced by the Bishop Exchange on Sackville Street. This arrangement lasted about forty-five years, until the Lorne Exchange dial service was extended to the area, succeeded in 1963 by Spryfield Exchange service and still later by the Ketch Harbour Exchange.”

Therefore from the time the telephone was installed at the Camperdown Signal Station until this station closed in 1953, it remained nothing more than a party line. This line had the Chebucto Head Lighthouse, the Pilotage Office in Halifax, the Citadel Hill Signal Station while it remained in service, the Signal Station on the top of the Post Office building on George Street which replaced it, and the Camperdown Wireless Station after it entered service. Places like that, which provided that type of service.

The telephone was introduced on the southeast side of St. Mary’s Bay for the area of Digby and Yarmouth counties of Nova Scotia in 1886 and through the peninsula of Digby neck to Westport in 1888. These telephones would have been connected with the other telephones in the province shortly after this date.

I have no record of Great Grandfather Spicer sailing into Halifax in SILVER LEAF. The procedure they would have followed would have been no different than that followed by so many for so many years. On entering the harbour approaches they would have flown the Canadian Red Ensign and more than likely just below it, the letters TQMF in a vertical line. Flying these signal letters was known, and still is, as “Making her Number”. On her foremast she would have flown the flag of the country she was coming from. If this had been the United States – the United States flag, if she had been coming from another port in the province she would have flown either the Canadian Red Ensign or the Union Flag. Likewise for whatever port it involved.

When SILVER LEAF was sighted by the signal station at Camperdown the duty signalman would make note of this, look her up in his code books and pass the word along to the appropriate authorities. For years this was done by visual signals. Now that the telephone was in use it was done via telephone. If there had been any questions he would have signaled to SILVER LEAF passing along the questions or answers. Naturally SILVER LEAF could have made any queries to him that she felt necessary. For many years the Citadel Hill station would fly the house flag corresponding to the approaching vessel. The Shipping Agents and the citizens of Halifax became accustomed to keeping a close watch on this signal tower. They would then know of any arrival and naturally those involved were forewarned and able to do all necessary for berthing the vessel on arrival, seeing to the discharging of cargo, loading cargo if necessary, and in general, helping to speed up the arrival and departure of any vessel.

One of the first telephones installed in the village of Sambro was that of James L. Hart, the local postmaster and storekeeper. This enterprise was taken over by his son C. W. Hart and was taken over from him by Helen and Alfred Gray in 1970. Helen learned the Post Office routine while working for C. W. Hart and thereby knew the routine well when she and husband Alfred took over.



Douglas Hale

This is Mrs. Jim Moody talking on a telephone at Grafton, Nova Scotia, February 1955. This telephone was in the Berwick telephone exchange and is the telephone in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Hale. Mrs. Hale was Mrs. Moody's daughter Jennie. Jennie was a telephone operator for the Farmers Telephone Company at Grafton before she was married. The Farmers Telephone Company was formed in 1898 and was one of the many small telephone companies that operated throughout Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Telephone Company began the consolidation of all the telephone companies in the province, a process

which was not completed in 1910 when Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company was formed with even wider areas of consolidation in mind. I must quote Mr. Marshall:

“Mrs. Moody is using the magnetic wall telephone which was listed as 247-22 on the Berwick Exchange. It is the standard Type 1317E or 1317CG built by Northern Electric from original designs of Western Electric in the United States going back to around 1900.

The three dry cell batteries used to power the transmitter required half the size of this telephone.

The signaling was done by turning a crank on the right side of the box to operate a “Five-bar” AC generator inside. This produced about 90 volts of 20 hertz AC current which was sufficient to ring up to 40 sets of telephone bells on a line up to 40 or 50 miles long.

A special arrangement was used to call the operator without ringing all the bells on the line. A small black button (seen in the photo an inch back of the middle hinge) was depressed while turning the crank and the operator’s line signal (drop) No. 247 would fall.

Our principal problem with this set was replacing batteries for people who habitually listened in on the line. My old mentor showed me how to prove this fault by checking the black paint on the back of the transmitter “cup”. If it was worn off it was highly probable the users were holding the heel of one hand over the “funnel” mouthpiece to block out background sounds and the fingers of that hand extended over the back of the transmitter cup, gradually wearing the paint. At the same time they were listening – and draining the batteries.

The upper telephone is a Type 1293GP, common battery dial wall set (as opposed to “local battery, magneto”). Again this is a Western Electric design of the 1900 era, first built without the dial for the “lift-the-receiver” system. The dial was added around 1919 and would have been the “big seller” in 1921 in North End Halifax.

The drastic reduction in size was accomplished through elimination of the generator and batteries, as all current required for both transmitter energy and signaling came in over the line from a large bank of glass storage cells in the exchange.

Lifting the receiver closed an internal switch to “turn on” the set and, if the system was “manual” using switchboards, a light in front of the operator. If the system was dial, the closing, or “looping”, of the line pulled up a relay in the dial exchange to start the automatic sequence of dial tone, etc.

Berwick skipped the manual stage, moving straight from the magneto to dial on 21 October 1954. So therefore, everybody had two telephones through the late summer of 1954 with instructions to continue using the old one until probably 10 p.m. on that date, therefore changing to the new set.

The Hale’s number and code ring also changed: instead of listening for two longs and two shorts (-22) their new number 474-0 probably gave them long, short, long, or something else not indicated by the suffix “0”.

The new Berwick dial system used three digit numbers for the one party line and three digits plus a code digit for the party lines. I do not have the code conversion table at hand but I would guess the multi-party lines were limited to 10 telephones per line with “split” ringing (five codes audible to each half of the customers on a line). In other words each customer heard his own code ring plus up to four others.”

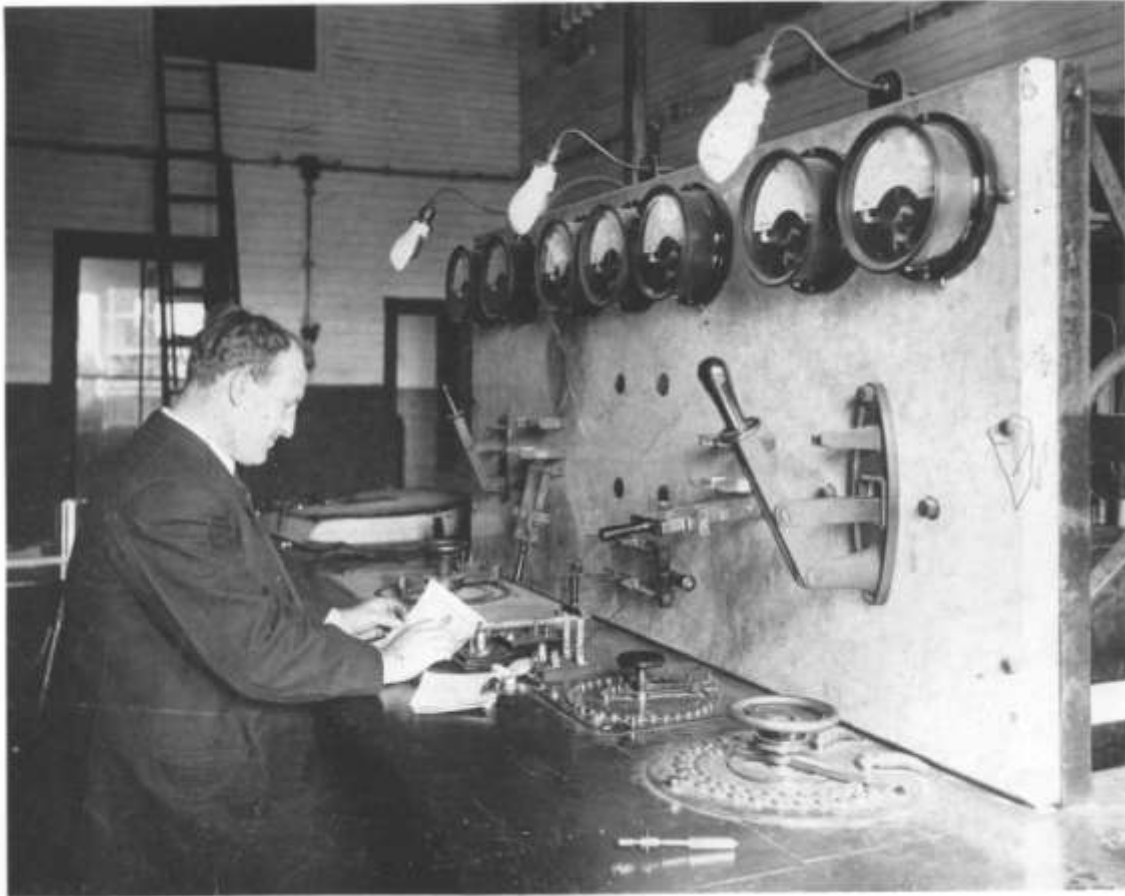
MARCONI’S FIRST STATIONS

Guglielmo Marconi was successful in obtaining transatlantic communications from a temporary station he set up on Signal Hill, Newfoundland, to one at Poldu, Cornwall, England, on December 12, 1901. He was unable to obtain permission to operate a permanent station in Newfoundland, because of an agreement made with the Newfoundland Government and the Cable Companies operating transatlantic cable service, therefore this Signal Hill station was moved to a permanent location at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, in 1902.



Public Archives Nova Scotia

This is Guglielmo Marconi on the left and James Harris at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, March 17th, 1907. Mr. Harris is operating the receiving portion of the station. This station passed telegrams between Canada and Europe and did not communicate with ships.



Public Archives Nova Scotia

This is Leonard R. Johnstone operating the transmitting portion of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, on March 17th, 1907. This station used a two letter call sign and by 1923 there were six such stations in Canada:

DR	Bird's Hill, Winnipeg, Manitoba 3400 meters
DO	Glace Bay, Nova Scotia 3000 meters
GB	Glace Bay, Nova Scotia 7925 meters
DQ	Markham, Ontario 3300 meters
FC	Montreal, Quebec 13,150 meters
BC	Vancouver, British Columbia 25,850 meters

The last three stations had not gone on the air by 1923 and therefore most of the message traffic reached this station via the landline telegraph. In other words it more or less served as an over the Atlantic Ocean link for the landline although there were under-water landline cables in service.

In 1904 the Marconi Company was issued a license by the Canadian Government to set up a system of radio stations to serve shipping approaching the East Coast and St. Lawrence River. The first station to go on the air in 1904 was Fame Point, Quebec, on June 25th and the first contact was with the Allen Line R.M.S. PARISIAN outward bound.

The first merchant ship to be fitted with wireless was the German, Norddeutscher Lloyd, passenger liner KAISER WILHEIM DER GROSSE. The installation of this station was completed on February 28th, 1900. The next merchant ship was the Belgian steamer PRINCESSE CLEMENTINE that was fitted in November 1900 and operated on the Dover, England, to Ostend, Belgium, route. All Canadian ships were British at this time and for many years after. I found conflicting detail on which British merchant ship held this

distinction. Some claim the Cunard Liner LUCANIA in 1901, but I was unable to locate the actual date the equipment was ready for service. Others claim the British Liner LAKE CHAMPLAIN whose installation was completed and ready for service in May 1901. There were many passenger liners in service at this time, sailing to various places on the globe, ships being the best and in most cases the only means of transportation during that era. Therefore some of the many were fitted, although most shipping organizations felt this new toy would be only a passing fad and if they did their best to humour it along, it would soon disappear and be forgotten.

Looking back, these first shipboard operators must have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The crews did not know what to make of them so more or less ignored them. Their equipment was capable of a range of only a few miles, so once they passed out of this range they had little to do. For the most part they merely played with their equipment and impressed any of the opposite sex they could entice into witnessing a demonstration. This demonstration must have been the biggest racket most of them had ever witnessed, and anyone who could communicate any distance with such an apparatus must have been placed on a level up near their God. And to think I missed it. The best I ever managed was a little chat with a Navy buddy in Morse code on our car horns. If it didn't impress those with us, it certainly made us a couple of good candidates for the two biggest nuts to ever pass the farm we went by.

These first sets (both ashore and afloat) were naturally very primitive but were to remain basically the same for about three decades. They were known as spark sets; the transmitter consisted mainly of a coil coupled to a long piece of wire for the aerial. The two rods on top of the set which were placed end to end with a gap between the two adjoining ends. When the telegraph key was pressed or closed, electricity would be applied to these rods causing a spark to jump from the end of one to the other. Therefore the term spark and the operator became known on board as Sparks or Sparkie and the term stuck to the very end. All of my personal effects which I carried with me at sea over the years were clearly marked Radio Officer S. G. Roscoe because all on board knew me only as Sparks or Sparkie and only a few of the officers would have known my name.

The first receivers were primitive forms of crystal sets using a coherer as the main receiving component until the actual crystal material was discovered. Actually these first sets more or less created a healthy burst of electrical static which is the reason they have been outlawed for many years. There was no such thing as a frequency band, you were either heard or not heard for the first few years. Once they became more popular a schedule was set up and each ship fitted was permitted a certain time to transmit while in a certain area. There were no laws governing the operation of this apparatus for more than the first decade of its operation, merely laws governing the licensing of the stations. The operators for the most part were landline telegraph operators who went to sea and served on the coast stations. No uniform type of code was used. You merely used any of the many codes. A code the receiving station could understand.

THE FIRST OPERATORS AND CANADIAN STATIONS

These first primitive wireless sets were most frustrating to operate at times. With no laws or jurisdiction other than some company instructions to go by, the language sometimes heard would offend delicate ears. One favourite term was GTH for Go To Hell. If someone got nasty, he flashed up his transmitter for maximum power and threw a book on his key creating as much interference as possible. The sets were never designed with much safety in mind and many old operators have been tossed in their grave with a number of scars on their hands from getting burnt by the sparks emitted from these old sets. But from this has grown our expanding communication networks. Fame Point, Quebec, was our first station as stated and the other five to enter service that first year, 1904, were Heath Point, Anticosti; Point Amour, Labrador; Belle Isle, Cape Ray; and Cape Race, Newfoundland. These first stations could communicate for maximum distances of between 60 and 130 miles.

The first Canadian ships to be fitted were CANADA, MINTO, and STANLEY. All three were fitted in 1904, but I have been unable to locate the actual date. I presume sometime in the spring and all three were owned and operated by the Canadian Government, and were known by the prefix DGS (Dominion Government Steamer). CANADA was assigned to the Department of Fisheries and MINTO and

STANLEY were specially constructed to provide a ferry service between the province of Prince Edward Island and the mainland.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the DGS STANLEY in 1930.

The CANADA was using wireless call code or call sign "CT", MINTO was using "MT" and STANLEY was using "ST". One would assume this was the suffix of a three letter call sign with the prefix "M" as all Marconi stations were using at the time. Apparently this is not so. A 1912 listing states all three calls had the suffix "D". This must have been used to indicate Dominion Government Steamer if it had any meaning.

The radio stations at Cape Bear, Prince Edward Island, and Pictou, Nova Scotia, opened in 1906 to provide communications with the MINTO and STANLEY mainly. Alf Lawton stated in his attempt to record this history that Cape Bear was assigned call code "BE" and that Pictou had call code "UB". Neither call code is listed in a 1912 list of these stations provided by Laval Desbiens so I am unable to confirm this.

Taking a serious look at the sites chosen by the Marconi organization for these first coastal stations, one is given the feeling they were chosen as much for their beauty as for their communication capabilities. Most were located at very good locations so that the operators had a good view of the surrounding area. Of ten these operators fixed up the actual grounds with flowering bushes and the like, making the station a very nice home-like setting. Most of these sites were located on the highest hill in the area with the idea of obtaining maximum range from the equipment because of this elevation.

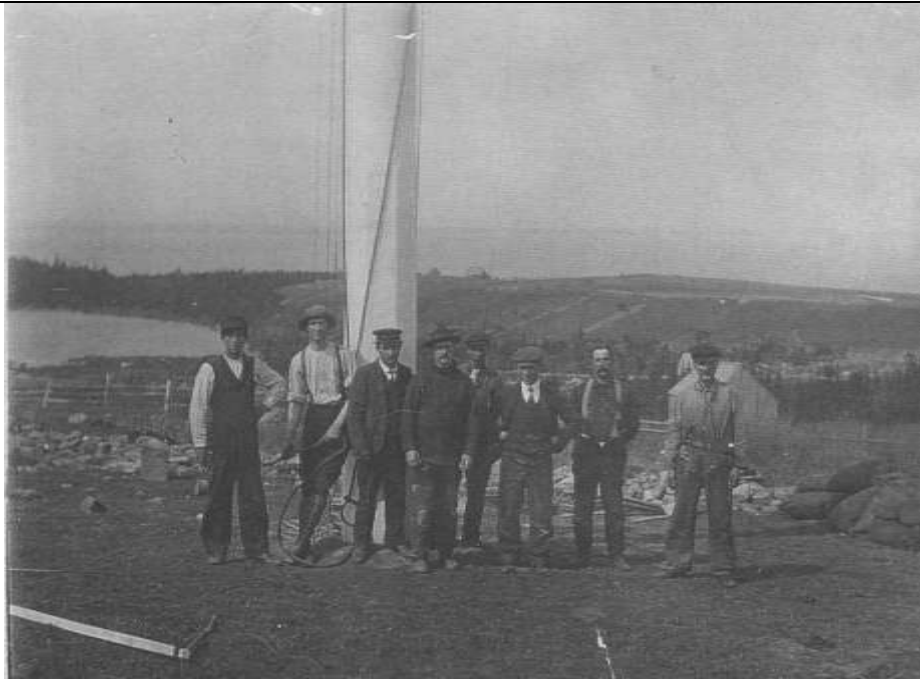
The Camperdown Signal Station site was one of these locations and established as part of this undertaking. Ground was broken on Thursday, May 4th, 1905, for the construction of the station that was fitted and ready for service on Wednesday, June 14th, 1905.

When the Camperdown station was completed and ready for service on June 14th, the cableship MACKAY-BENNETT was ordered to conduct tests with the station in order to give some indication of its useful range. These tests for one reason or another did not take place until Monday, June 19th, 1905.



Cyp Ferland

This is the Camperdown Wireless Station VCS from 1905 to 1926.



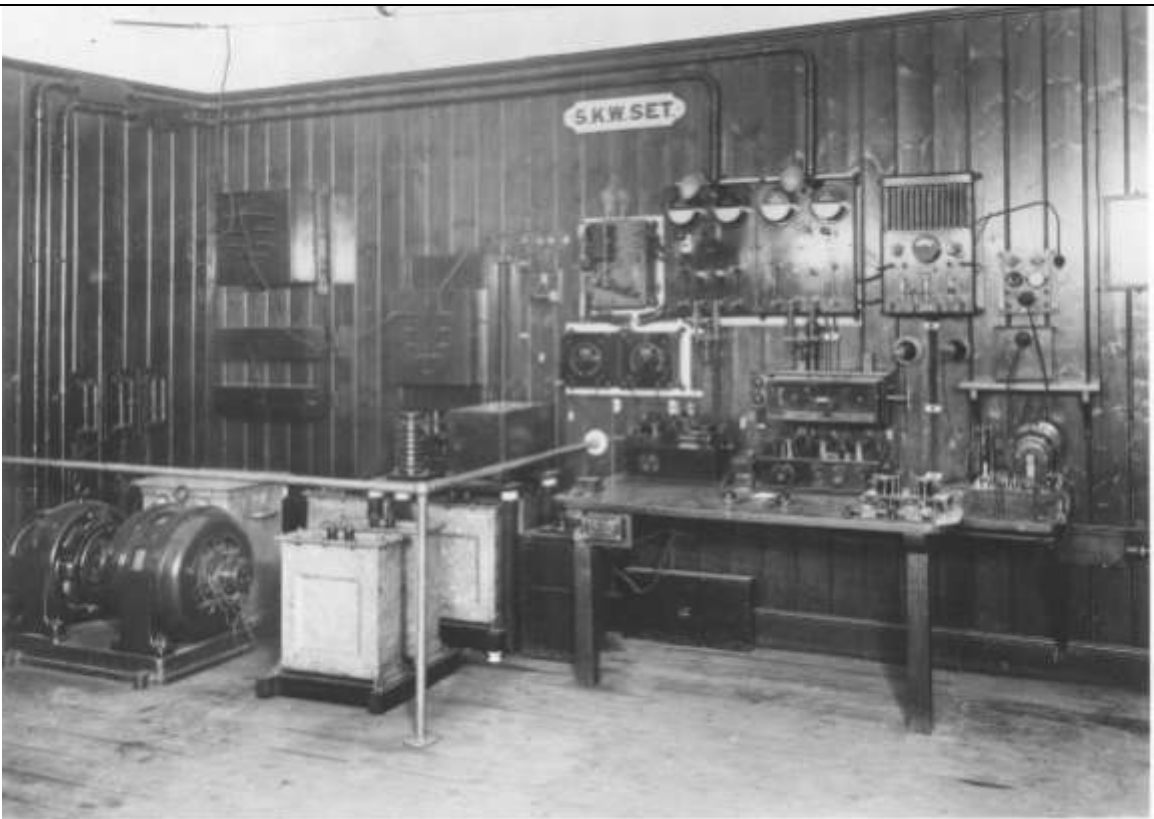
Michael Christie

This is the crew erecting the antenna at Camperdown 1905. Left to right: Alf Pettipas, B.S.Y. Clifton, Captain Henry R. Cook, the next two are unknown, J. D. Taylor, Sam Pettipas and an unknown rigger.



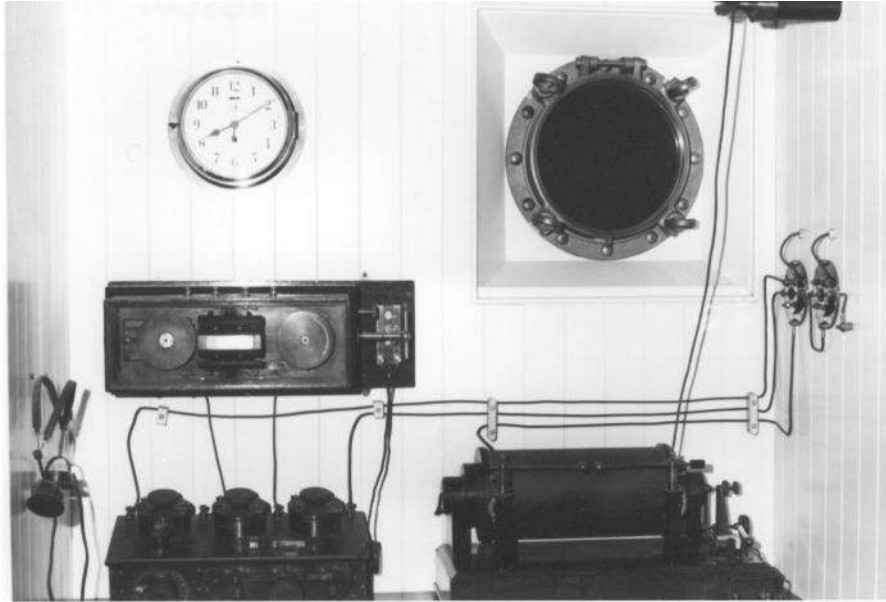
Michael Christie

This is Camperdown in 1906.



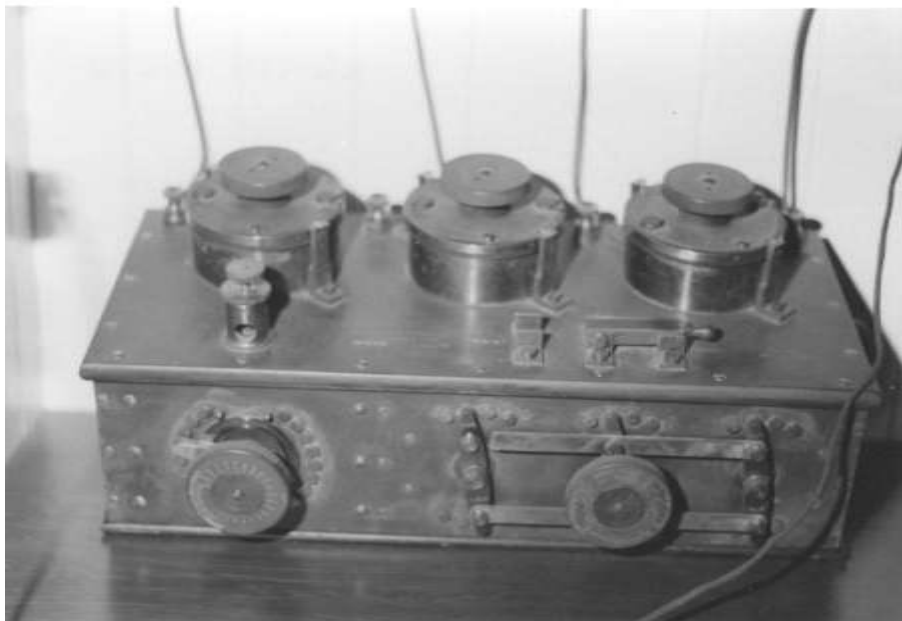
The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited

This is a museum display of a typical five kilowatt wireless coast station from 1904 until 1918.



R. J. "Dick" Roscoe

This is a shipboard wireless station of around 1910 on display at the Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa, Ontario.



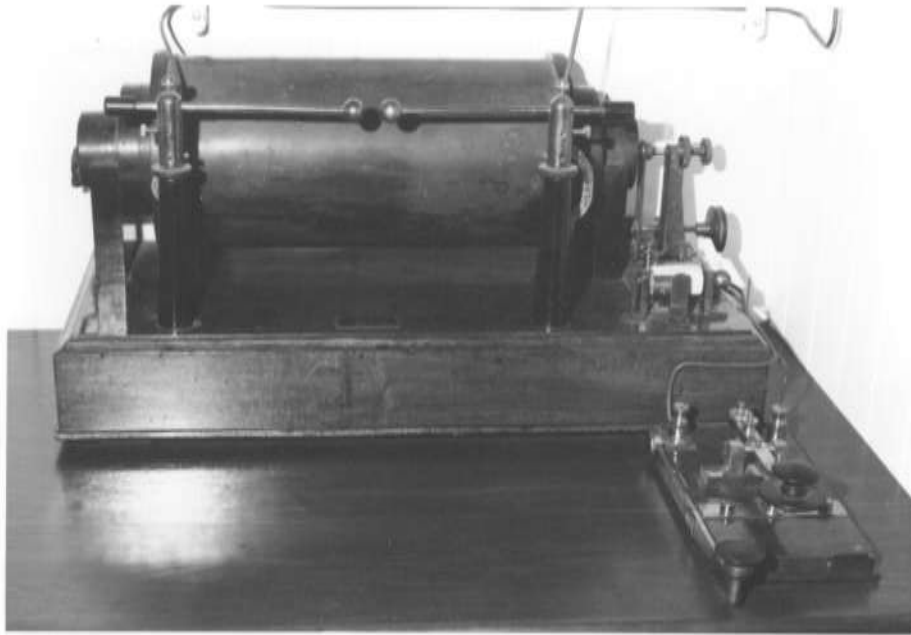
R. J. "Dick" Roscoe

This is two views of the Spark Receiver on display at the Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa, Ontario.



R. J. "Dick" Roscoe

This is the Transmitting Key of the Spark Transmitter on display at the Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa, Ontario.



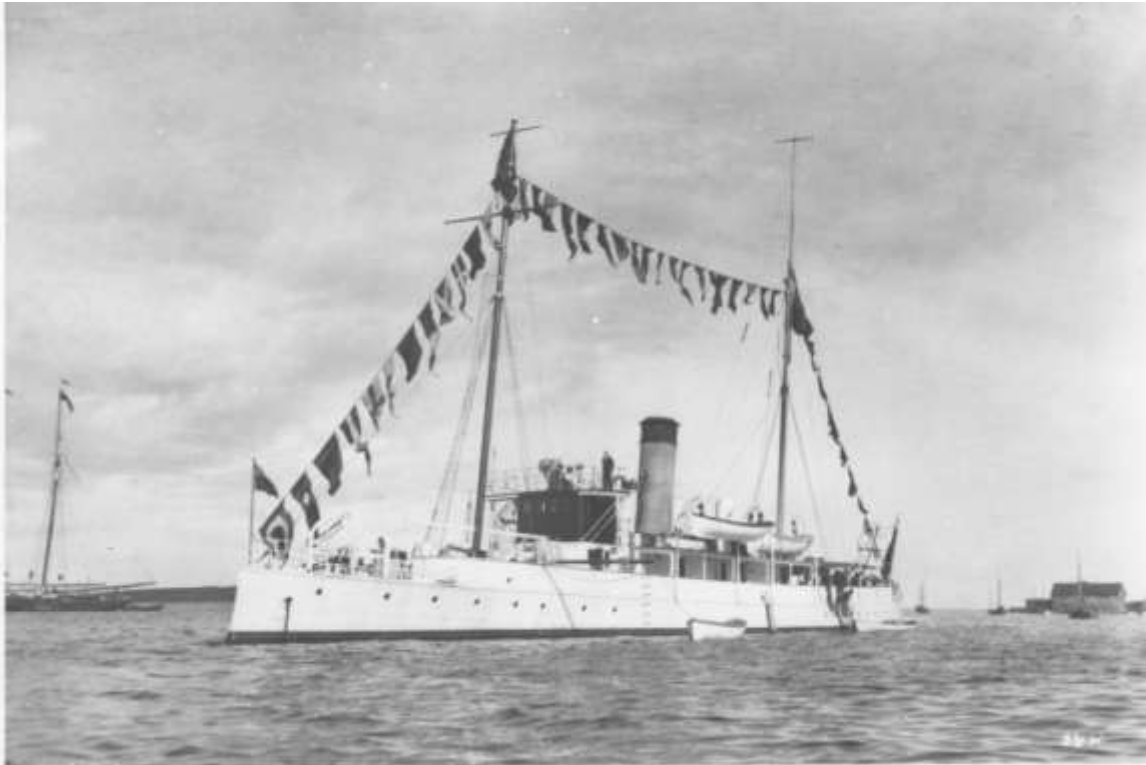
R. J. "Dick" Roscoe

This is the Spark Transmitter of the Shipboard Station on display at the Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa, Ontario.



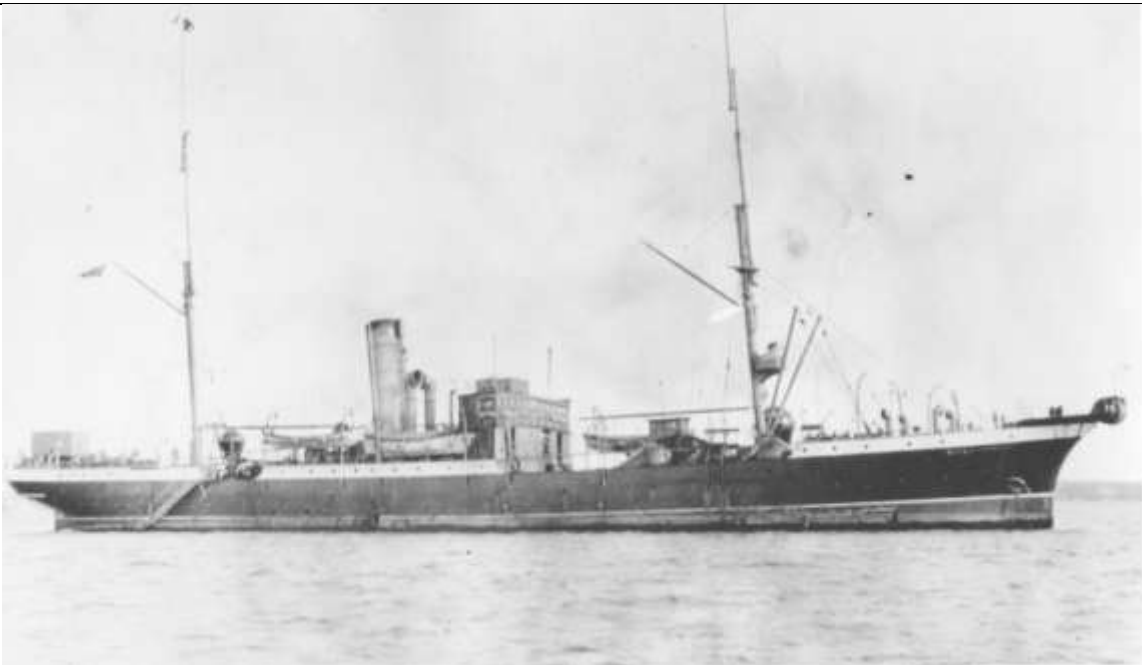
The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited

This is a museum display of a typical one kilowatt wireless coast station from 1904 until 1918.



Public Archives Canada PA-42011

This is the first ship to contact the Camperdown Wireless Station DGS CANADA.



Thomas H. Raddall papers Dalhousie University Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia

MACKAY-BENNETT

Thomas H. Raddall states:

“The “Mackay-Bennett” was a cableship based at Halifax from 1884 to about 1924, when she was retired from sea service. Her American owners (The Commercial Cable Company) had her built in Glasgow and named after the company’s founders, John W. MacKay and James Gordon Bennett. The owners kept her under British registry, and her officers and crew were mainly Canadians and a few English. I served as a wireless operator in this ship in 1920-1921.

Her first wireless outfit was a primitive little set using a ten-inch induction coil in the transmitter and a “coherer” in the receiver. I located this outfit in the ship’s fore-peak, where it had been stowed away and discarded for many years, and took the “coherer” for a souvenir. It is now in the Raddall Collection at Dalhousie. Marconi in person installed this set in the ship in 1899, when “Mackay-Bennett” was sent down to New York to observe and report the famous yacht race between Sir Thomas Lipton’s first “Shamrock” and the defending “Columbia”.”



Dalhousie University Archives Thomas Raddall Collection

This is the coherer from the original receiver on the Cableship MACKAY-BENNETT.

On Monday, June 19th, 1905, the staff of Camperdown was under the authority of Mr. B. S. Y. Clifton, Camperdown’s first officer in charge. While Mr. Barridon, an operator at Camperdown, was conducting these tests with MACKAY-BENNETT, which commenced with him standing by at noon on Monday, they heard another station sending a series of the letter V in Morse code. The letter V consisting of three dots and one dash is used to this day for testing or tuning purposes. It is normally transmitted in a series of three letters at a time. The automatic calling or marking signal emitted continuously from the last station started with three letters (in three groups) of the letter V, on all high frequencies used for radiotelegraph.

One can almost feel the excitement running through Mr. Barridon on hearing these first letters, the first heard by Camperdown Radio. He must have been thrilled on establishing contact with this station at 4:25 PM to learn that it was none other than DGS CANADA.

DGS CANADA was Canada's first operational warship. Although she belonged to the old Department of Marine and Fisheries, she operated much as a small warship until our Royal Canadian Navy was formed on May 4th, 1910. CANADA also carried Canada's first deep-sea wireless operator.

The first of these wireless operators were landline telegraph operators. They brought along many of their former procedures and practices to the wireless world. One of these was their call codes, a letter or two to denote specific stations, whereby all stations had a brief and simple means of identification rather than spelling out the name of each station during the working of any communication. All of these first coastal wireless stations were assigned two letter identifiers, known as call codes, which have become standardized and in today's terminology call signs. In many cases the landline telegraph operator of a specific station when it first went into service had his initials used as the call code.

Although these first telegraph operators to be assigned ships had a ready-made call code in the form of the flag signal code they did not use same. They must have felt these four letter codes were too cumbersome, because it was close to three decades that ships operated with a separate wireless and visual signal code. The signal code was four letters and the wireless code was two for a few years and then three letters were assigned.

I am convinced that CANADA's first deep-sea wireless operator was Mr. C. T. West, although I have looked in vain for a record of such a gentleman. I have searched all known records including my own family tree that is not only wall-to-wall, but tree-top-tall in Wests. My reason for basing my assumption is that on the margin of the first Camperdown Log the operator wrote C. T. West as though he had had a chat with the individual and obtained his name. The log entry next to this, the first communication of the station, clearly states that the DGS CANADA was 25 miles east of the station. The practice of these landline operators in using the initials of the first operator assigned to a station as its call code, convince me that CANADA's call code "CT" was Mr. West's initials. The oldest record I could locate of the operator in CANADA was May of 1907 when a Mr. H. H. Lyle was sailing in that capacity.

Camperdown went on the air with call code "HX" for Halifax and was one of the few stations to retain the name of the site it was located, rather than the name of the nearest town or city, as most other stations in Canada were to do. For example Yarmouth Radio went in service as Yarmouth although the station was actually located in the village of Rockville outside the town of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.



Cyp Ferland

Our first wireless operators had no other means of improving the quality of their transmitting other than to mimic those blessed with a natural ability for this art. Jim Myrick was the one on the Eastern Canadian stations whom they all tried to copy. This is the only photograph of Jim I was able to locate. He is seated on the left transmitting, while Cyp Ferland is seated on the right receiving, on the opening of the transoceanic beam service from Montreal to Overseas August 1926. The other men are unknown.

The first call signs of some of the first stations in this area were:

FP	Fame Point, Quebec
HP	Heath Point, Anticosti Island, Quebec
BL	Belle Isle, Newfoundland
CR	Cape Ray, Newfoundland
CE	Cape Race, Newfoundland
BE	Cape Bear, at the eastern side of the entrance to Charlottetown, PEI
UB	Pictou, Nova Scotia
SJ	Partridge Island, outside Saint John, New Brunswick
SD	Sable Island, Nova Scotia
SB	Cape Sable, Nova Scotia
CY	Cape May, New Jersey
NY	New York, New York
SE	Seagate, USA
SK	Sagaponac, USA
CC	South Wellfleet, Massachusetts
SC	Siasconsett, Nantucket Island, Massachusetts

The Canadian stations were either equipped with landline telegraph or had a landline telegraph office nearby where messages received via wireless could be transferred to the telegraph lines for forwarding. Camperdown's landline telegraph was completed and in service at 4:25 PM on Wednesday, August 30th,

1905. One would think everything of importance was to happen at Camperdown at 4:25 PM, as both the landline and the station's first radio contact took place at that time.

Camperdown's call code on this landline was "CD", from the name Camperdown and remained the same call until replaced by the Teletype in 1956, fifty-one years later. It was the only station on a line into Halifax at station "AX". The operators at Camperdown had to be proficient in both the radio and landline codes, these fifty-one years, like the operators on so many of the other stations. There is a pronounced difference, not only in the characters of the two distinct codes, but for anyone not familiar with either or the other the landline was a "clickety click" and the radio a "buzz buzz".

Camperdown's main job at the beginning was to forward all messages collected from ships by Sable Island and Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, in addition to any messages sent to Camperdown direct by any ship within range. At times it was a very busy station collecting all these messages from three locations, involving several spark stations, and then transmitting it all via "CD" into Halifax "AX". The messenger boys at the Halifax Telegraph Office would deliver all the messages for Halifax and the remainder would have to be retransmitted via the various landline telegraph circuits to their destinations.

There was a time signal service available via these landlines, which the wireless operators retransmitted over the air via their wireless transmitters. The first record I found of Camperdown receiving this service was from the Western Union at ten o'clock on the morning of September 13th, 1905. These time signals originated from an observatory at Saint John, New Brunswick, and this service remained in operation until the mid 1950's when it was replaced with the present service provided by radio station CHU Ottawa. CHU transmits these signals continuously on three high frequencies, also known as short wave depending on the terminology most familiar to you.



John Rae VE1AGN

These are the only log books of Camperdown Radio known to be in existence. These are the logs from 1905 to 1910 and are now held at Dalhousie University Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

I was very fortunate in locating the first logs of Camperdown and have spent many hours going through them trying to fully understand what the operators were thinking at the time of the entries. I turned these logs over to the Archives at Dalhousie University, Halifax, on completion of this project so that they will be available for future use. Most of these entries I have managed to understand but of course cannot fully understand what it was actually like to live and work at one of these stations. There are several things that become more obvious but are now more amusing than anything else: travel was by horse and buggy, of course, when the station first entered service in 1905 and for many years after. A trip to Halifax for supplies was a real safari and would involve going in on one day and with luck, providing all business could be transacted, returning to the station the next day. Some of the actual workings of the equipment are interesting. In order to operate the transmitter on power or at its maximum output a large gasoline engine had to be started by crank. This thing in its primitive form gave a lot of trouble. The gasoline feed line was but one of its weaker or more troublesome points. There are entries in the log that the duty operator rectified this trouble with patches of lead. There is another entry that the actual crank for starting this engine was broken and the operator was complaining of the inconvenience of trying to start this beast without it.

The actual radio language is just as interesting. X's are recorded numerous times and this meant static or natural interference. It is hard for us to believe at this date and time that the station was actually put out of service for periods of several hours from static alone. This static can still be most severe, but the quality of the receiver limited the capabilities of these first stations. Another favourite log entry is "Bi Tis". This meant that the operator had shut down his gasoline engine and was sitting back listening on batteries only. There were no speakers and the operators on duty wore large headphones continuously. They were capable of very low power transmission from these batteries, but the normal procedure was to start the gasoline engine and give them all the power available. These transmissions could be heard and copied for some distance by the naked ear that will give an indication of the racket made while transmitting. The operators at sea must have had some rather unpleasant experiences from the racket these first sets created, especially if they happened to have the misfortune of being located near some of the other crewmembers.

These log entries are most interesting and a few entries on the distance the station managed in the first months of its existence are as follow:

Thursday, September 14th, 1905, "Worked CA 190 miles from HX". CA was HMS CORNWALL.
December 1st, 1905, at 12:30 AM, contacted SC, Siasconsett, Nantucket Island, Massachusetts.
December 9th, 1905, at 12:20 AM "Ex TR's AA 240 miles east". I was unable to find the name of the ship with call code AA, but this ship communicated with HX Camperdown many times.

One early entry has me rather mystified. At 11:50 AM October 23rd, 1905, the station heard RA5 call RA but no reply. Do you suppose this was some kind of boat belonging to a ship? Hard to believe with the size of the equipment in use, and I suspect it was most likely a couple of military stations of some description, or some operator playing with his station.

One early entry is most interesting:

"The whole Wireless World Working – Quite the Job" at 9:00 PM, Sunday, October 15th, 1905.

The commercial operators were more or less snowed under from interference when the Naval Ships came near their stations. In true military fashion the Navy not only had a lot to say to each other but felt they owned the available air space. About the time of World War I the Naval Ships commenced their transmissions with a signal like our letters TUUU sent as one character today. This was the signal for all commercial or merchant stations to clear off the air and let the Navy stations through. But in 1905 this signal was a few years off in the future. A Naval Squadron was in the area of Halifax on October 21st, 1905, and the duty operator at Camperdown made the following entry:

“1:15 to 2:15 PM – Not a dot (strange) Fleet must be taking a holiday in wireless. Perhaps they are waiting for us”.

LADY LAURIER AND SABLE ISLAND

The grand old lady of the East Coast, DGS LADY LAURIER, entered service from her Scottish builder's yard in 1905. She made the fourth Canadian ship to be fitted with wireless and entered service equipped with her first call “LR” of the many she would wear out in the next sixty years of faithful service. One would assume this first “LR” call would have been “MLR” but not so. It was “LRD” according to a 1912 list of these call codes provided by Laval Desbiens. The “D” suffix may have stood for Dominion as in Dominion Government Steamer if it meant anything at all.

One of the first tasks of DGS LADY LAURIER must have been that of taking the construction crew from Camperdown out to Sable Island to construct the famous Sable Island wireless station. She departed on June 21st, 1905, and this station was constructed and put in service making its first contact with Camperdown “HX” at 7:15 PM on Saturday, June 24th, 1905. This log entry at Camperdown was made in red ink and large lettering.



Canadian Coast Guard

DGS LADY LAURIER



Warren E. Hagar

This is the Sable Island Beacon in the old Marconi building 1937.



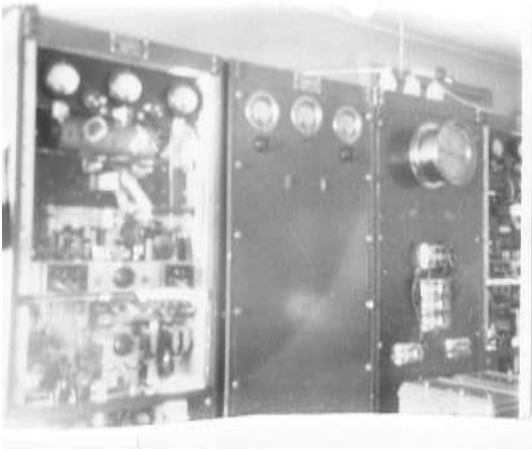
Warren E. Hagar

This is the Sable Island Beacon building in 1938.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the Sable Island Beacon transmitter in 1937.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the Sable Island Beacon transmitter in 1937



Warren E. Hagar

This is the Sable Island Beacon transmitter in 1937. These are all the photographs I have of Sable Island and I do not have a photograph of the communications station or the communications equipment.

This first Sable Island station used call code "SB" until the Cape Sable station went in service, at which time Cape Sable used the "SB" call code and Sable Island became "SD". This of course is no big thing, but it creates a problem for me because I do not know whether it should be filed under the heading of human nature or stupidity. This is one of the many mysteries in the "radio world" of this area over the years. The call codes SB and SD will mean nothing until broken down as they sound in Morse code. The letter B is a dash and three dots and the letter D is a dash and two dots. It is hard for us today to use such similar calls and at that time it was a nightmare with their primitive equipment. Many entries in the old HX logs leave you sympathizing with the duty operator. Because of his X's he was unable to tell which station was trying to contact him. I can understand these stations entering service with these calls, but why one was not changed is beyond me.

ODE TO A WIRELESS TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

When the air is fine and balmy
and the ether's free and clear
and the sigs come in like thunder

with a biff that jars the ear,
Then the PBO* is happy and he
wears a sunny smile and
doesn't curse the traffic that
keeps coming all the while,
But when X's come on steady
with a sizzly frizzly roar
and the sigs die down to nothing
Then the common Op gets sore
and the language that he uses
melts the contacts off his key
burns the "Bradfield" to a cinder,
leaves the aerial hanging free,
And the Old Recording Angel wears
a stern and saddened look as he
logs the bad Op's language in
the big Recording Book.

- Poor Bloody Operator

by Harry Pearson, Sable Island, 1905

FREQUENCIES

A few years after these first spark sets saw service, it was discovered that these bursts of electrical static produced by them consisted of waves, which are known in modern terminology as radio frequencies. Not only could these waves be measured, these spark sets could be designed to transmit and receive on certain waves. These waves have been known as wave lengths, meter bands that are in common usage, and frequency bands or frequencies.

As this newer equipment became available it meant that Camperdown, Sable Island, and Cape Sable could communicate with ships on one frequency and communicate with each other on another. This of course meant that communications would not be disrupted because they could use different frequencies. In other words Camperdown could be in communication with Cape Sable while Sable Island was in communication with a ship and no interference would be generated from the other stations.

THE FIRST GERMAN STATION

When Marconi first put these apparatuses into service, mainly the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, he owned and operated all of them under companies formed in each country. Actually he tried, through various patents and through various business schemes, to control the whole of this marine communications around the world. This led to some very interesting legal battles when other companies started operating similar services. One notable case was when Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany was sailing in the German Hapag Liner HAMBURG and wanted to send a telegram to Germany which did not have a coastal wireless station at the time, 1905. This telegram could have been sent to a station on the island of Borkum and then via cable to Germany. The Marconi Empire refused to accept messages from any stations other than Marconi. The HAMBURG was fitted with a German Telefunken station and therefore this telegram was refused. Needless to say one rather frustrated Kaiser Wilhelm II landed back in Germany and immediately set about creating a German wireless station that became Norddeich Radio. Norddeich Radio entered service on April 30, 1907, for communication with German merchant and naval ships. Telefunken is, and has been, the main German, marine communications organization. They build much of the electronics produced in Germany, but the main point of interest to us, which came about from Kaiser Wilhelm II's outburst against the Marconi Empire, was the alteration of the call codes. From that time on

all the Marconi call codes were given the prefix M at which time Camperdown became MHX, South Wellfleet, MCC, and so on around the world. The German stations were assigned a D prefix signifying Deutschland, the German name for their country. I also believe some of the American ships were assigned an A prefix because the old HX logs record a few such stations, which I have interpreted to be either a United States Naval or Coast Guard vessel, but was unable to actually break down to the ship's name. This move in the call signs was made on January 1st, 1908.

This made little if any difference to the actual operation of these stations. The operators continued to identify any stations heard by their sound rather than call code or name. For example Dr. Deforest was one of the prominent American experimenters and manufacturers and his signal became known as copper, or Deforest signals. Telefunken became Telefunken and Marconi became Marconi. In other words the operator would record strong signals heard, Telefunken, copper, or whatever he felt them to be. The operators continued the practice of using the two-letter suffix. Therefore on the air Camperdown remained HX, South Wellfleet, CC, Sable Island, SD, and so on.

THE FIRST DISTRESS CALLS

Soon after the first wireless stations were to see service in ships, it became apparent that they were going to be more than a passing fad soon to be forgotten. The one thing that made this so obvious was the simple fact that ships that were fitted and found in a condition of distress were able to notify others and thereby save the lives of those involved. In many cases these lives would have most certainly been lost had there been no wireless station. This was one of the reasons Mr. Marconi worked so hard to give ships a voice capable of communicating many miles.

The first incident of wireless being instrumental in distress was on March 3rd, 1899, when the Goodwin Sands Lightship, on the south coast of England, was in collision with the steamship R. F. MATHEWS. This Light Ship had recently been fitted with wireless and was capable of calling for assistance.

The first distress call, as such, was sent by Relief Lightship number 58 on December 10th, 1905, with the effective signal "HELP" before it sank in a gale on station at Nantucket Shoals, Massachusetts.

CQD

The landline telegraph operators had used the signal CQ for some time as a general signal for all stations on their various lines. They naturally brought this signal with them as a part of their operating habits they were to bring to the wireless and later radio world. When it became obvious that wireless was to play such an important part in these distress incidents, the Marconi Company sent instructions to all their operators that they were to use the signal CQD as a distress signal. Therefore any vessel finding itself in a state of distress could precede its communication with this signal and this communication would be given priority over all other communications.

REPUBLIC

Jack Binns was one to use this CQD signal. On January 23rd, 1909, Jack was sailing in the British White Star Liner REPUBLIC and was outbound from New York for the Mediterranean with 460 American tourists as passengers. At 5:40 AM REPUBLIC collided with the Italian Liner FLORIDA inbound to New York from Italy with 830 emigrants on board, mainly people evacuated from the Messina earthquake. FLORIDA was not fitted with wireless when these two ships collided off Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in thick fog. Jack's wireless station was located in the typical shack of the era, a wooden shack fitted on the boat deck. The collision left this shack in a mess and Jack had to operate his set in the fog and the cold. He managed to rig a canvas and cover himself in a blanket for some protection but at that he did much shivering while he spent seventy-two hours talking another liner and a sister ship, the BALTIC, in alongside to rescue his passengers.

Jack was made a hero from this incident and was credited with the saving of probably 1500 lives. The crew and passengers were transferred from REPUBLIC to the FLORIDA shortly after the collision and on the arrival of the BALTIC the majority of the FLORIDA's passengers and crew, and the crew and passengers from REPUBLIC were again transferred to the BALTIC. A considerable feat that was done by small life boats in rough seas during the hours of darkness.

FLORIDA managed to limp into New York for repairs but the REPUBLIC was not so fortunate and sank while attempts were being made to tow her. Jack was not the type to welcome any kind of publicity. He became an overnight hero both in the United States and his home in England and was stuck with the title CQD Binns for the rest of his life – which ended in a New York hospital at the age of 76.

1100 - Call ID No ans.
 1105 - Ad nil bi. to
 1108 - Ch 4 from ID bi.
 1110 - Ad nil bi. Call IDB no ans.
 1112 - 1 fm IDB, give "G" for calls "H" seems
 unable raise him.
 1115 - IDB tells for to try tune up for "MFF"
 as she is calling "GK".
 1120 - Ad on par after "15" by request
 of IDB tell IDB to
 1125 - IDB tells for he heard "ID" say "ke"
 wreck 115 miles east of Ambrose Light
 Lat 40.17 Long 70
 1130 - from IDB.
 1135 - E. George Eccles.

John Rae VE1AGN

This is the log entry of Camperdown HX recording the participation of the station in the loss of the REPUBLIC with call sign MKC after she was in collision with the FLORIDA. FLORIDA was not fitted with wireless.

This incident was the one to make wireless an important part of the shipping world and to knock the passing fad theory out of their vocabulary. From that date there became a mad scramble to fit more and more of the world's ships with wireless. Camperdown MHX was already a veteran by this time, nearly four years old and the station log entries for this incident are reproduced on these pages.

E. GEORGE ECCLES

The world's first wireless operator to lose his life in the line of duty was a Canadian, E. George Eccles from Almonte, Ontario. George was one of 213 people in the liner OHIO that struck Steep Rock off British

Columbia on August 26th, 1909, seven months after Jack Binns experience with REPUBLIC. I was able to locate twenty-five incidents previous to OHIO in which wireless had been involved in distress situations. Although ships rarely get in trouble, but when they did, this new wireless equipment made a big difference in the outcome.

George Eccles sent the CQD signal and managed to have all on board OHIO rescued except three of his shipmates and himself. George had been a typical example of our first wireless operators. He had wandered around western Canada and the western United States as a landline telegraph operator. This voyage in OHIO was to have been his last because he had accepted a position in Alaska to operate a wireless station being erected at Seaward. Those who knew George remembered him mainly from his fast clear sending.

George did not know his CQD signals had been heard. The coast was not very well charted in that area in 1909 and was the reason OHIO hit steep Rock at 1 AM. Ships and coastal wireless stations were few and far apart but an alert operator at Ketchikan, Alaska, heard George's CQD and relayed it to the operators in the ships HUMBOLDT and RUPERT CITY.

George's body was found on the beach the next day with a head wound that indicated he had apparently been killed by fallen wreckage, or a swinging davit. A fellow wireless operator escorted his body home to Almonte. The town of Almonte erected a small memorial to his memory.

WIRELESS OPERATORS MONUMENT

Battery Park in New York City has a monument:

"In Grateful Memory of Those Wireless Operators Who Made The Supreme Sacrifice At the Call of Duty They, Dying so, Live."

On this monument are engraved the operator's name, the name of the ship, the date, and the general location; i.e. Atlantic Coast, Pacific Coast, North Atlantic, Off Azores, and so on.

The dedication of the monument took place on May 12th, 1915, and this monument is still maintained. The Veteran Wireless Operators Association has an annual memorial service in memory of these operators. George Eccles' name was the first of the ten operators to be engraved on this monument when it was dedicated in 1915.



Veteran Wireless Operators Association

The annual Memorial Service, Wireless Operators Monument, Battery Park, New York City, Friday May 25th, 1979. The gentleman facing the camera on the right of the monument is the Norwegian Vice Consul, Kjell Nordang, who was present for ceremonies honouring two Norwegian Operators lost at sea. Girls had been sailing as Radio Officers since this equipment was first fitted in ships. Both these Norwegian operators were girls, twenty-four year old Bente Knudson, Radio Officer in MV NORSE VARIANT, and twenty-seven year old Kari Bergelien, Radio Officer in MV ANITA. Both ships were the same size and both sank in the same storm on March 22nd, 1973, shortly after they departed Norfolk, Virginia. Kari had transmitted a message to station VCS that was to be her last, but a station on Prince Edward Island claimed it heard her make three attempts at contacting another station on March 22nd. Motorman Stein Gabrielsen in MV NORSE VARIANT was the only person to survive the loss of both ships. Bente Knudson initiated a search that was to learn the fate of both ships, by remaining on duty and transmitting a distress call. She was not among the crewmembers that left in the life rafts.

October 14, 2007

This is the Fifth Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

THE TITANIC

The TITANIC disaster on April 15th, 1912 has been called the greatest disaster known, which may be true. There were many factors involved to create this catastrophe. It is highly unlikely that a disaster of such magnitude could be reproduced with a moving vehicle. If for no other reason, the changing modes of transport have made it impractical for so many of the world's upper class to be found in the same vehicle. So much more is known about the many factors which created the TITANIC disaster and with the help from many minor incidents, it is clear that no matter how much emphasis is placed on safety, accidents are bound to happen.

Because no one had taken into consideration the possibility of a distress call occurring while the operators were sleeping, there were insufficient operators aboard the vessel. The TITANIC carried only two operators and many of the ships in the area at the time, including the largest passenger liners, carried only one. A normal day for these operators was from early in the morning to late at night and the most of them slept from around midnight until about seven in the morning. The TITANIC hit an iceberg at 11:40 PM. She sank around 2:30 AM. Because of this the hours of watch keeping for the operators at sea were altered. The larger ships were required to maintain a watch around the clock and this of course meant carrying more operators or making those carried work longer hours.

It was impracticable for the smaller ships to carry more than one operator so this brought about the automatic alarm. The auto-alarm was a device that rang three bells in a ship that was near a ship in distress. This was done by sending a proper signal consisting of twelve four second dashes with a one second space or pause after each on the distress and calling frequency of 500 kilohertz (600 meters). The auto-alarm was designed to activate on the reception of four of these dashes and therefore sending three times the required number was only additional assurance. On receipt of these signals the auto-alarm rang a bell next to the operator's bunk, a bell in the radio room, and a bell on the bridge that would alert the navigating officer on duty.

The last auto-alarm would, in addition to this, activated if for any reason it developed a fault and became unserviceable or if the main electrical power supply to the radio room failed. The last models were also so sensitive that if a high powered station thousands of miles away sent this signal during the hours of darkness they would activate. This was a nuisance, but it was better to be safe than sorry.

A regulation radio room clock had these four second dashes clearly marked in red for the operator's convenience in sending this signal by a hand key. This clock also had the two three-minute silent periods clearly marked in red. All ships and coastal radio stations had to terminate any transmission on 500 kilohertz twice per hour from fifteen until eighteen, and from forty-five until forty-eight minutes past each hour. They were to monitor this frequency for any possible distress signal. Especially those from low-power lifeboat radios. Some of those clocks, in addition to those marks, had two three-minute periods marked out in green or blue. These two were from on the hour to three minutes past and from thirty minutes to thirty-three minutes past the hour. Those were the two radiotelephone silent periods for the distress and calling frequency of 2182 kilohertz and the same ruling applied to this frequency at those times.



S. G. "Spud" Roscoe

This is one of the last models of a Ships Radioroom Clock. This one has a quartz crystal to regulate the time and operates from one "AA" battery. The first models were mechanical and had to be wound once a week. We normally wound them on one of the scheduled duty periods on Sunday. One of the old mechanical models I sailed with had a real personality. When north of around 30 degrees north it gained a

few seconds each day and lost a corresponding number of seconds when south of that area. It must have had something to do with the earth's magnetic field as near as we could tell.

Cape Race, MCE, was the main coast station involved in the TITANIC disaster. Mr. Walter Gray, a prominent figure in the early days of our wireless stations, was in charge of this station at the time and needless to say all at the station were kept very busy. Walter was a personal friend of Jack Phillips, the TITANIC's Chief operator, and stayed on the air for ninety-six continuous hours after receiving Jack's distress call. Jack went down with the ship while still sending the call for help, was rescued later, but died from exposure. He was one of over fifteen hundred persons, many of the world's upper class, to lose their life from this disaster. Every wireless station in the world was involved with this incident in one way or another, but I found no direct involvement of any description by Camperdown, MHX.

The TITANIC had call code MGY and she was the first to use the signal SOS, and sent both the CQD and SOS signals. The German representatives at the 1903 Berlin Radio Convention had insisted on changing this CQD to SOE. It was eventually agreed to change it to SOS. This made a good clear signal for this purpose, three dots, three dashes, and three dots, sent as one character and not spaced out as the letters S O S. The E is only one dot in code and could easily be lost in static or interference. SOS is the distress signal to this day in Morse code. This signal was known as SOS, for the same reason the signal for the question mark was called IMI. The three letters make for an easy way to remember the full character. The question mark is two dots, two dashes, and two dots. Two dots are the letter I. Two dashes are the letter M.

Another bad habit was that ships at the time of the TITANIC fired flares and Roman candles at night for communication. By firing these in various colours each ship was identified. Therefore when the TITANIC sent up a large number of flares, signifying distress, no one knew what they were and paid little attention to them. This practice was terminated shortly after this disaster and flares, since that time, are used only to signal a distress.

This letter is held by the Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Anglo – American Telegraph Co.
Cable Ship “Minia”.

April 27th/12
2.20 AM

My darling Mother

I expect you will be surprised to receive this written on this paper but I am on watch now in the wireless room so thought it a good opportunity to write you. This is the most remarkable trip the old Minia has ever been on as we are looking for bodies from the Titanic wreck. You know I wrote that we were up North on a Cable repair when we heard she had sunk – we arrived in Halifax about three days after and it was reported that we had “some of the rescued on board” but we had not, and the reporters that came to meet us were disappointed. The same day that we came in, the Cable Ship “Mackay-Bennet” of the Commercial Cable Co. was chartered by the White Star (owners) to go out and look for the bodies from the Titanic. The M-Bennet took 150 coffins and about 20 tons of ice and went to sea at once – 3 days after we were also chartered by the W. Star Co. and we also took 150 coffins and about 20 tons of ice and the same weight of old iron and sailed about noon on Thursday in a most rotten fog. When we arrived (it is about 600 miles) we found that the Mackay had picked up over 200 bodies and had identified about 150 and had buried the rest. They picked up J.J. Astor's body and some other well known people. By the way – there was a reward offered of \$10,000 for Astor's body which was lucky for them. We began the search yesterday and the first we picked up was C.M. Haye, Pres. Of G. Trunk Rail, it was no trouble to identify him as he had a lot of papers on him and a watch with his name on. We picked up 10 more bodies yesterday (waiters and sailors). All those who are identified are embalmed and packed in ice and are to be sent to N. York. I can tell you none of us like this job at all but it is better to recover them and bury them properly, than let them float about for weeks. The Revd. Cunningham came out with us to bury those not identified. When we passed

over the spot where the T. sank he held a short service in the Saloon, which I thought very nice of him. I expected to see the poor creatures very disfigured but they all look as calm as if they were asleep. Mack and I have had to keep 6 hours watches all this trip, so as to keep in touch with all ships and give them news – it is difficult to keep awake all night but I am getting used to it now.

May 2nd. Being again on watch it is now 3 a.m. will write a little more – We have been sailing about looking for bodies for the last 4 days and have only picked up 17. There has been a lot of wind and bad weather since the accident so the bodies are much scattered, some we picked up over 130 miles from the wreck, as they go very fast when in the Gulf Stream - very likely many will be washed up on the Irish Coast, as they are all going East.

May 3rd. Just a few lines to let you know how things are going. I honestly hope I shall never have to come on another expedition like this as it is far from pleasant! The Dr and I are sleeping in the middle of 14 coffins (for the time being) they are all stacked round our quarters aft. The Titanic must have been blown up – when she sank, as we have picked up pieces of the grand staircase and most of the wreckage is from below deck, it must have been an awful explosion too, as some of the main deck planking 4 ft thick was all split and broken off short. I guess the fellows on the “Mackay-Bennet” will get a bonus for this job and my word they deserve it after picking up over 800 bodies. May 6th. Halifax. We arrived in port this morning. I hear the M. Bennet fellows are to get a months extra pay. I don’t suppose we shall get a cent, as we only got 17 bodies. They say there was tons of money on some of the bodies when they were picked up. Astor had \$10,000 and another man had a bag of diamonds hung round his neck worth \$250,000. Some of the jewels that went down in her were worth enough to buy ½ doz “Minias”, one woman’s pearls alone were worth \$450,000. I am sorry to say that we have to go out again in about 2 days up North the same place where we were in when we heard about the Titanic. Etc. etc.

Your loving son

Francis Dyke

Many bodies picked up from the TITANIC are buried at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

THE 1912 RADIO CONVENTION

At the time of the TITANIC incident the various authorities involved in the wireless business were fully aware of the need for some regulation governing the operation of these stations. Because of this an international radio convention was being held at the time in London, England. There had been two such conventions previous to this, both held at Berlin, Germany, one in 1903 and another in 1906, but little of anything concrete came from either. This convention of 1912 at London was the first International Convention that changed the wireless world for all time on an International scale.

The first and foremost was the mandatory examination and licensing of all radio operators. This not only meant that the people operating the equipment had to know something about same, it also meant that certain rules and procedures had to be recognized and adhered to, but above all else it meant that the various authorities had an excellent means of policing this radio communication. If some operator failed to meet the necessary qualifications, he was refused permission to operate. Further still, if an operator failed to operate per the rules, his license was suspended and he was out of work and trade. Needless to say this cleaned up the radio trade immensely.

Another important point brought about by this first Radio Convention of 1912 was the issuing of call signs with a prefix to signify the country of location, or the county of registration as it pertains to ships. Ships and coast stations were still issued a three letter call sign. The ship’s call sign was still separate from the flag signal call sign. The great interest and rush to fit more ships with this radio equipment, as the result of the REPUBLIC – FLORIDA collision of January 1909, had not seen sufficient ships fitted to warrant the issuing of four letter call signs.

Some of these first blocks of call signs, or codes, assigned on an international basis are still held by their original countries. Canada was assigned the block of call signs beginning with VAA and ending with VGZ,

one of Canada's blocks to this day. The reason for the V rather than C prefix is believed to be in memory of Queen Victoria who had recently died and many of the British Colonies were assigned these prefixes.

VAA to VZZ allotment of 1912

VAA-VGZ Canada
VHA-VKZ Australia
VLA-VMZ New Zealand
VNA-VNZ South Africa
VOA-VOZ Newfoundland
VPA-VSZ British Colonies not autonomous
VTA-VTZ British India
VXA-VZZ Great Britain

There were many other countries assigned call blocks, but many of the call blocks were not assigned at this 1912 convention. Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, still retain these first issues: Italy IAA-IZZ, France FAA-FZZ, Britain GAA-GZZ and MAA-MZZ, United States NAA-NZZ and WAA-WZZ, which are still held by these countries. But politics has played a big part in the changes of these calls. For example Germany in 1912 was assigned AAA-AZZ, DAA-DZZ, and KAA-KCZ, but today holds only DAA-DTZ from this first issue. The United States has held KAA-KZZ for some years since Germany lost KAA-KCZ. From this 1912 convention Great Britain also held BAA-BZZ and YYA-YZZ, but has since lost these blocks.

The block QAA-QZZ was reserved for code abbreviations and not used as call signs for any station, and this has been the practice to this day.

The TITANIC was not only the largest ship in the world at the time of her collision with an iceberg and following loss, she was the most modern and on her maiden voyage. A court of inquiry was held involving the most powerful marine authorities of the period. From this inquiry many faults in the basic design of the TITANIC and many faults in the basic laws governing the operation of all ships were discovered. This brought another International Committee into operation, known as the Safety of Life at Sea Conference (SOLAS). SOLAS has brought about many changes and has improved practically everything connected to and operated within ships. SOLAS was to make it mandatory for vessels of certain sizes or descriptions to carry radio and qualified radio operators. SOLAS made it mandatory for sufficient lifeboats to be carried by all ships. The TITANIC legally carried sufficient lifeboats because of out of date laws basing this fact on the size or cubic capacity of the ship, rather than ensuring there was room in a boat for every person on board. The TITANIC carried many more people than could fit into the number of lifeboats she carried. SOLAS has made it mandatory for all the equipment carried in a ship to be inspected regularly by certified inspectors. It is a pity such tragedies happen. But it would appear at times that this is the only way for us to learn because so much of the seafaring community was to gain from the TITANIC disaster.

Another organization to be created as a result of the TITANIC disaster, which should be mentioned, was the International Ice Patrol which is a very important organization that supplies information on ice as it affects navigation.

When Canada was assigned the VAA-VGZ call block in 1912, the first stations were all reaching their seventh or eighth year in service. Camperdown was assigned the VCS call sign and the old MHX call sign went to Great Britain. The only stations with Canadian call signs to retain their old Marconi suffix were Cape Race MCE to VCE, Cape Ray MCR to VCR, Point Riche MCH to VCH (they were Newfoundland stations) and Clarke City (Sept Iles, Quebec) MCK to VCK. So really, VCK was the only Canadian call sign to go from CK to MCK to VCK and terminate with the original call sign.

The Canadian Coast Stations per the 1915 List are as follow:

VAA Halifax
VAB Point Grey

VAC Cape Lazo
VAD Pachena
VAE Estevan Point
VAF Alert Bay
VAG Triangle Isle
VAH Dead Tree Point
VAI Ikeda Head
VAJ Prince Rupert
VAK Victoria
VAN Glace Bay
VBA Port Arthur
VBB Saulte Ste. Marie
VBC Midland
VBD Tobermory
VBE Point Edward
VBF Port Burwell
VBG Toronto
VBH Kingston
VBM Les Pas
VBN Port Nelson
VCA Montreal
VCB Three Rivers
VCC Quebec
VCD Grosse Isle
VCE Cape Race, Newfoundland
VCF Father Point
VCG Fame Point
VCH Point Riche
VCI Heath Point
VCJ Harrington
VCK Clark's Point
VCL Point Amour
VCM Belle Island, Newfoundland
VCN Magdalen Island
VCO North Sydney
VCP Cape Bear
VCQ Pictou
VCR Cape Ray, Newfoundland
VCS Camperdown
VCT Sable Island
VCU Cape Sable
VCV Partridge Island

These forty-four stations were the only radio stations, according to this list, in Canada at this time except for a few amateur experimental stations. The United States left some of their old familiar Marconi suffixes in their call signs. South Wellfleet, Massachusetts went from MCC to WCC. Although the original site has disappeared because of erosion from the natural elements, mainly the Atlantic Ocean, and the station was moved to Chatham, Massachusetts, it was one of the most powerful stations in operation. Naturally New York went from MNY to WNY. This station closed in the early 1960's.

Although stations at Cape Ray, Cape Race and Belle Island were actually in the colony of Newfoundland at this time, they were advertised as Canadian stations and had Canadian call signs. Rather strange, but no doubt it had something to do with politics or was simply the beginning of so many incidents that made no sense. Actually it appears as though those stations that the Canadian Marconi Company installed on their own in Newfoundland received Canadian call signs and the stations that the Newfoundland government

hired the Canadian Marconi Company to install received the Newfoundland call signs. The ones with the Newfoundland VO call signs were listed as part of the Canadian Marconi Company operation.

By 1915 the colony of Newfoundland had ten stations and strange as it seems these were Canadian stations according to the records as stated. The ten stations were as follow:

VOA Battle Harbour
VOB Venison Island
VOC American Tickle
VOD Domino
VOE Grady
VOF Smokey Tickle
VOG Holton
VOH Cape Harrison
VOI Makkovik
VOJ Fogo

THE DURLEY CHIME

1914 not only saw the outbreak of World War I, it saw a young operator start a career that was to cover most of the history of communications in the area of Camperdown Radio VCS. Cyril R. Spracklin was assigned his first ship that year, the CITY OF SYDNEY with call sign MZR. She belonged to the Black Diamond Line of Sydney, Nova Scotia. This line went out of business shortly after World War I, but was mainly in the coal trade although the CITY OF SYDNEY did carry passengers around the coast during the off season coal trade. Sprack's second ship was the BOSTON, a ferry belonging to the Yarmouth to Boston Line. She was Canadian flag, but Sprack did not remember her call sign. The spark stations he was operating on these ships were capable of transmitting on two frequencies – 300 and 600 meters. 600 meters is 500 kilohertz in modern terminology. They were tuned by altering the oscillator transformer coil that was housed in a large box, and were tuned to make the signal as sharp as desired.

Sprack went north to supply Port Nelson, VBN, on the Hudson Bay in 1914. On this trip he was "Sparks" in the DURLEY CHIME with call sign VDY. She and two sister ships had been purchased for this supply work. One of his many memories of this most enjoyable trip in VDY was being able to hear and copy the news that was transmitted by Chatham, WCC, while they were in the Hudson Strait. This of course meant he and his shipmates had the latest news as though they were at home receiving the daily newspaper. This was a big improvement over a few years previous on these voyages. By the time DURLEY CHIME returned to Halifax, World War I had broken out. The effects of the 1912 International Radio Convention were not in full swing and the operators were still in the habit of dropping the first letter or prefix of their call signs. Not only this, but they were still separating their calls with the letter V rather than DE. The separation of call signs, when making a call was changed to DE around this time and was the separation signal until radiotelegraph terminated. Camperdown was still using the MHX call as well at this time. In other words, when Sprack called Camperdown it would have been HX V DY, rather than VCS DE VDY terminated with the letter K (the invitation to transmit). By the way these stations had to have their receivers switched off while transmitting.

As DURLEY CHIME approached Halifax Sprack began to realize he was in for some trouble because of the sloppy operating practices of these stations. The British Navy was in full swing on 600 meters along with the British Red Cross Hospital Ship STEPHANO. The operator in STEPHANO was operating by dropping the prefixes in the calls and separating his calls with the letter V. STEPHANO's wireless call sign was MDY. Sprack decided using his full call VDY or dropping the prefix would do no good and felt that no matter what he did, Camperdown and the others would mistake him for MDY. Then he realized that the duty operator at Camperdown would also have to know the old landline code, the American, or Morse code. At this time the Radio Code (the Continental Code) was being used over the air. This Continental Code was the one used via radio until the end and can still be heard on the Amateur Bands. The Continental Code is slower than the American or Morse code.

When Sprack was handed his arrival message to transmit, he called Camperdown and passed this message in the landline code. No problem and all went very well. He signed off with Camperdown and then went down for a bath in order to be cleaned up and ready for shore as soon as DURLY CHIME was made fast alongside Halifax.

Sprack was away from his station for about one-half hour or slightly longer. On his return to the radio room he switched on his receiver to hear Camperdown call him with a message. By this time DURLEY CHIME had developed a problem with her engine room telegraph and had gone to anchor until repairs were completed. Sprack naturally answered Camperdown and received a message stating that on DURLEY CHIME's arrival, the Captain and the wireless operator were to report to Naval Headquarters in the Dockyard complete with the radio log. Once the telegraph to the engine room from the bridge was repaired, DURLEY CHIME hauled in her anchor and proceeded into Halifax. As soon as the ship was secured and the Captain was free, he and Sprack complied with the instructions they received via message.

The letter Y in the landline code was a two-character code consisting of two dots each. The letter Y in the radio code is a dash, dot, and two dashes. The letters V and D are the same in both codes. Therefore Sprack's VDY to the many Navy telegraph operators listening should have sounded like a VDII. The letter I in the radio code is two dots. There being only three letter call signs in use and the practice of dropping the prefix meant that the Navy, somehow, copied Sprack's call as VDI and not VDY or VDII. The problem was that VDI was the call assigned to the Icebreaker EARL GREY that had recently been sold to Russia and had left for delivery sometime before this incident. The Navy immediately went into a big flap and went chasing off to find the EARL GREY and try to ascertain the reason for her return. Alf Lawton was the wireless operator who made the delivery voyage to Russia in the EARL GREY. The Icebreaker EARL GREY was HMCS EARL GREY at this time and Alf was a Warrant Officer Telegraphist in the navy.

Once all this had been resolved between the Navy, Sprack and his Captain, the meeting was terminated although the Navy insisted on Sprack making an apology. Sprack refused because as he said "there was nothing to apologize for". He was certainly correct on that count, but there must have been many such incidents, although few would have created so much confusion. This was the reason for adopting the Continental Code for use as the radio code. The Continental or Radio Code does not contain any double character letters and therefore less room for error, although it is a much slower code. (An operator can move along much faster using the old landline code.)

The EARL GREY used call code "RG" prior to 1912 but this did not stand for MRG according to a 1912 list of these call codes provided by Laval Desbiens. According to this list the full call code was RGD and the "D" suffix may have stood for Dominion as in Dominion Government steamer if it stood for anything.

This 1912 list has the following Canadian Government vessels with their full three letter call sign as follows:

ABD	ABERDEEN
CTD	CANADA
DRD	DRUID
RGD	EARL GRAY
LRD	LADY LAURIER
MTD	MINTO
MLD	MONTCALM
CGS	QUADRA
STD	STANLEY

Why does the QUADRA have the suffix "S" and not "D" like the others? Your guess is as good as mine I am sure.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

The first Canadian East Coast Stations were both owned and operated by the Marconi Company until 1915 when most were taken over by the Canadian Government. The reason for this move by our government was that they did not want to get into a dispute with private enterprise, claiming both the Marconi Company and the British Columbia Telephone Company wanted to erect stations on the west coast of this country. Since Marconi had erected the East Coast stations, he was most interested in West Coast stations. Whether or not this move by our government was correct remains one of personal opinion. These stations were the only wireless or radio stations around at the time and those who could operate them were looked upon as a rather elite or special crowd. Any bureaucrat in sole charge of these stations would make for a rather imposing figure, a position that could be a very good political football.

That is the way I understood this history when I wrote that but apparently the Canadian Government owned the stations from the beginning and simply hired the Marconi Company to operate them. The employees were with the Marconi Company and there were many other reasons that would have influenced the government to obtain complete control over these stations in 1915. World War I was well underway and it was becoming very clear that wireless was an important tool in the warfare arsenal. By this time many incidents south of the border in the United States had also added further fuel to the fire of government ownership. Many of the companies formed had gone out of business and there had been many lawsuits that had been won or lost in the courts over wireless in one form or another. There had also been a strike of organized wireless operators on March 19th, 1913.

So when all things are seriously considered our government had a lot going for it to make themselves solely in charge of all wireless stations, although there was plenty of “action” around to make it feasible for several small Canadian companies to make quite a name for themselves. But in those days, as today, it was rather hard to find Canadian ownership of anything.

Our government of the day could have just as easily issued various licenses to Canadian companies and set up a very good policing staff to discipline and police the wireless activities. Instead they took over ownership of all stations and hired the Marconi organization to operate them. It is believed that the Marconi Company did this for an annual fee of five thousand dollars, plus a fee for all messages handled. Therefore these stations made a fortune for this organization, a British Company. Logs indicate that the EMPRESS OF IRELAND, with call sign MPL, sent over four hundred telegrams at a time. She was only one of many passenger liners contacting these stations continuously. Cape Race, VCE, and Sable Island, VCT, were the busiest being right in the middle, you might say, of the high traffic routes. These two stations were often heard arguing over message traffic accepted by one or the other – which the other felt was rightfully his. The law stated that a ship was to work the nearest station only to the ship and this law was to remain until spark was replaced by the continuous wave signal late in the 1920's.



Walter Hyndman VE1BZ

This is the Wireless Room in the Passenger Liner MAURTENIA about 1919.



Walter Hyndman VE1BZ

This is the Wireless Room in the CARINTHIA in 1920.



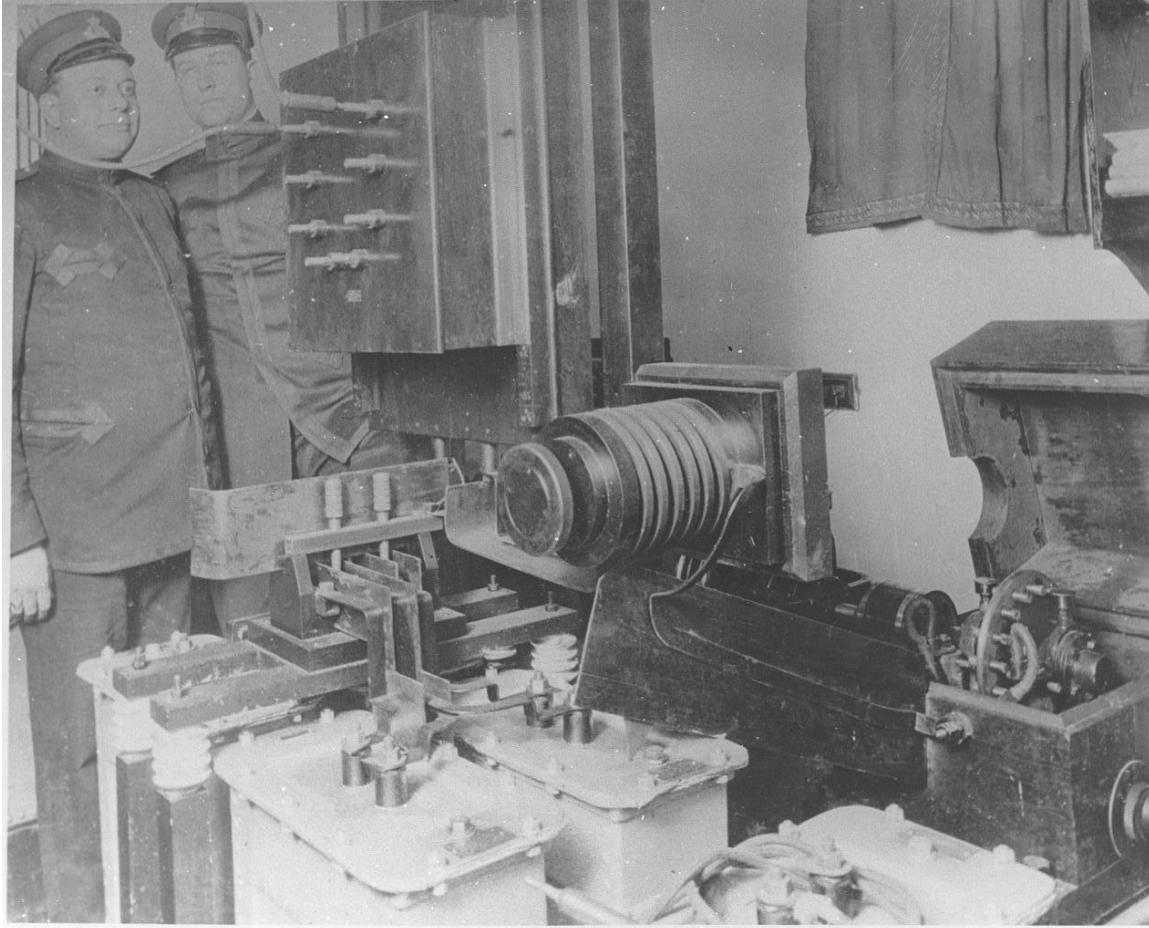
Walter Hyndman VE1BZ

This is the Wireless Room in the Italian Passenger Liner CONTE BIARNANCO in 1921.



Walter Hyndman VE1BZ

This is the Wireless Room in the Passenger Liner TRANSYLVANIA in 1920.



Walter Hyndman VE1BZ

This is the Wireless Room in the Italian vessel GUISEPPI VERDE 1918. A Marconi Five Kilowatt Transmitter of 1910

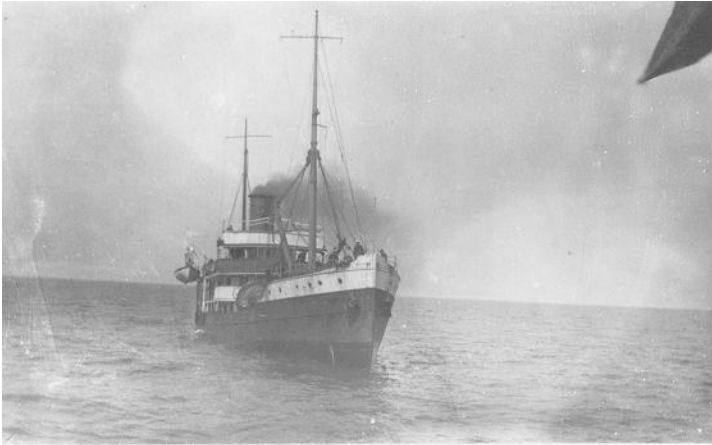
There were many immigrants coming over from Europe and only ships to bring them so there were many messages to be handled. Another “old timer” I met many years ago claimed he was working at Chatham, WCC, at that time and that it was routine to go on duty and spend the full eight hours in steady communication with only one ship. The majority of these messages he handled were addressed in care of some Italian Barbershop or other, in New York City. Many future Canadian and American citizens arrived at this time and if they each sent only one telegram it would have amounted to a great number. Therefore the Marconi Company had no choice but to show a good profit from this arrangement.

HMS NIOBE was to be fitted with a Marconi set on December 31st, 1901, while a member of the British Navy’s Channel Squadron. She became HMCS NIOBE and through my research I assume she was fitted shortly after that date, which would have seen her “on the air” two years previous to the CANADA, MINTO, and STANLEY that were fitted in 1904. The earliest Call Sign, VDA, I was able to locate for her, was the one assigned from the major reshuffling of the calls which were made from the 1912 International Radio Convention. This was from the 1915 List of Radio Stations of the World; the actual title of the publication and not Wireless Stations as one would expect.

The eighty-seven Canadian ships fitted per this 1915 listing are as follows:

Flag	Radio	Name
	VDA	NIOBE
	VDB	RAINBOW

VDC	CANADA
VDD	MINTO
VDE	STANLEY
VDF	LADY LAURIER
VDG	ABERDEEN
VDH	DRUID
VDI	EARL GREY
VDJ	MONTCALM
VDK	MONTMAGNY
VDL	LADY GREY
VDM	QUADRA
VDN	ESTEVAN
VDO	DOLLARD



Warren E. Hagar

CGS DOLLARD in 1925

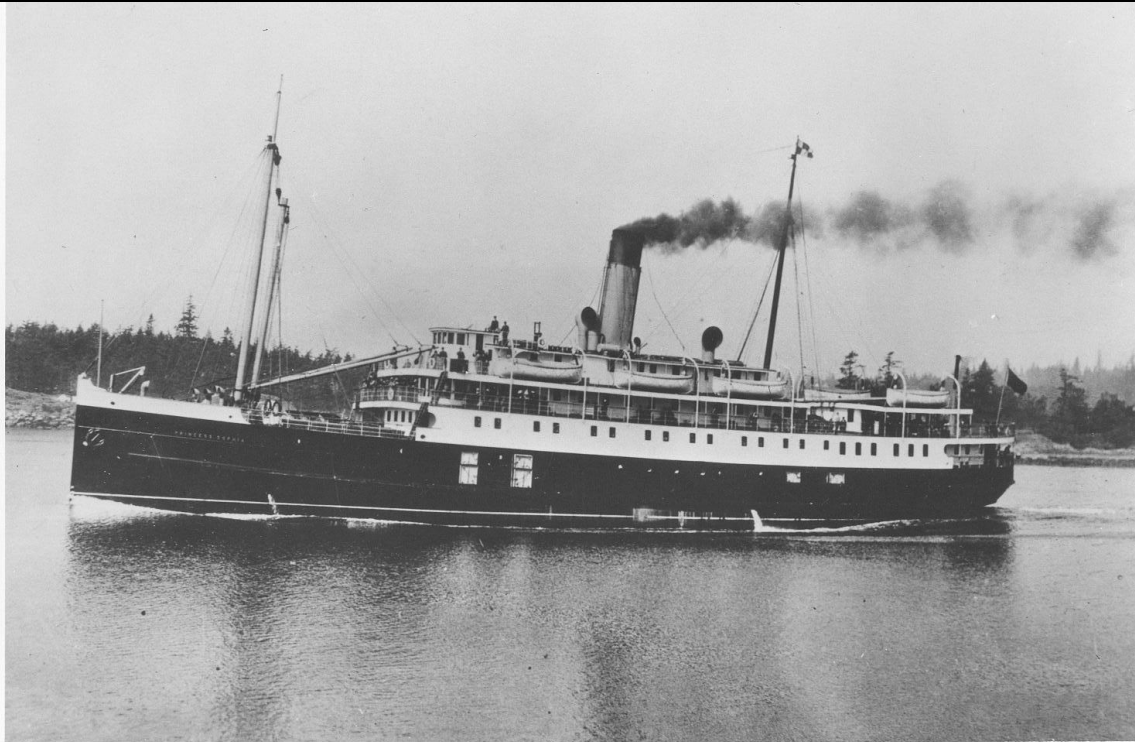


Warren E. Hagar

This is the C.G.S. DOLLARD alongside Joggins, Nova Scotia, at low tide.

RGCW	VDP	NEWINGTON
LVNB	VDQ	ARANMORE
	VDR	LURCHER lightship
HNRI	VDS	SIMCOE
JCMD	VDT	ACADIA
	VDU	MALASPINA
	VDV	GALIANO
	VDW	MARGARET
SKCV	VDX	LADY EVELYN
JCRF	VDY	DURLEY CHIME
HWNC	VDZ	SHEBA
	VEA	DALHOUSIE CITY
	VEB	CORONA
	VEC	KINGSTON
RTFD	VED	TORONTO
HCBS	VEE	HAZEL DOLLAR
	VEF	SYRACUSE
	VEG	RAPIDS KING
	VEH	CHIPPEWA
	VEI	GARDEN CITY
	VEJ	CHICORA
KRJT	VEK	MACASSA
	VEL	CAYUGA

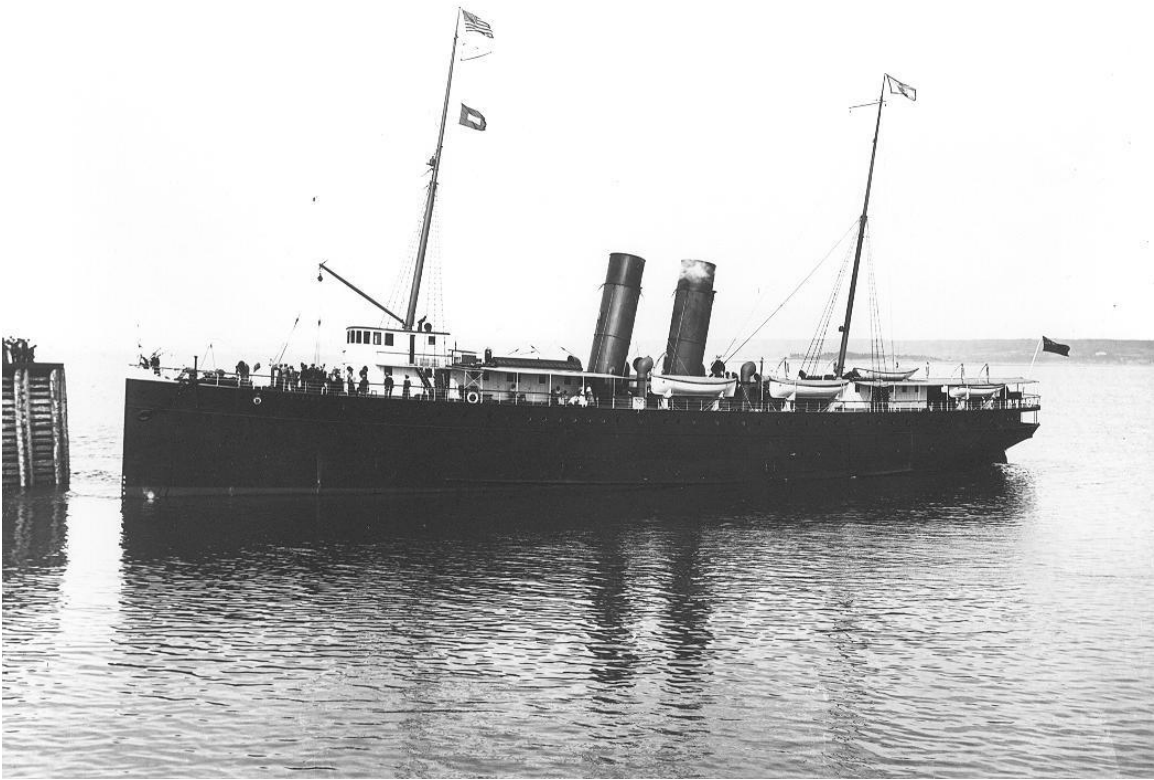
	VEM	MAJESTIC
	VEN	TURBINIA
NVSJ	VEO	CASCAPEDIA
	VFA	PRINCESS ADELAIDE
	VFB	PRINCESS MARY
	VFC	PRINCESS BEATRICE
	VFD	PRINCESS ALICE
	VFE	PRINCESS CHARLOTTE
TSQJ	VFF	PRINCESS VICTORIA
	VFG	PRINCESS ROYAL
PVNQ	VFH	PRINCESS MAY
	VFI	PRINCESS SOPHIA



Public Archives Canada C-19108

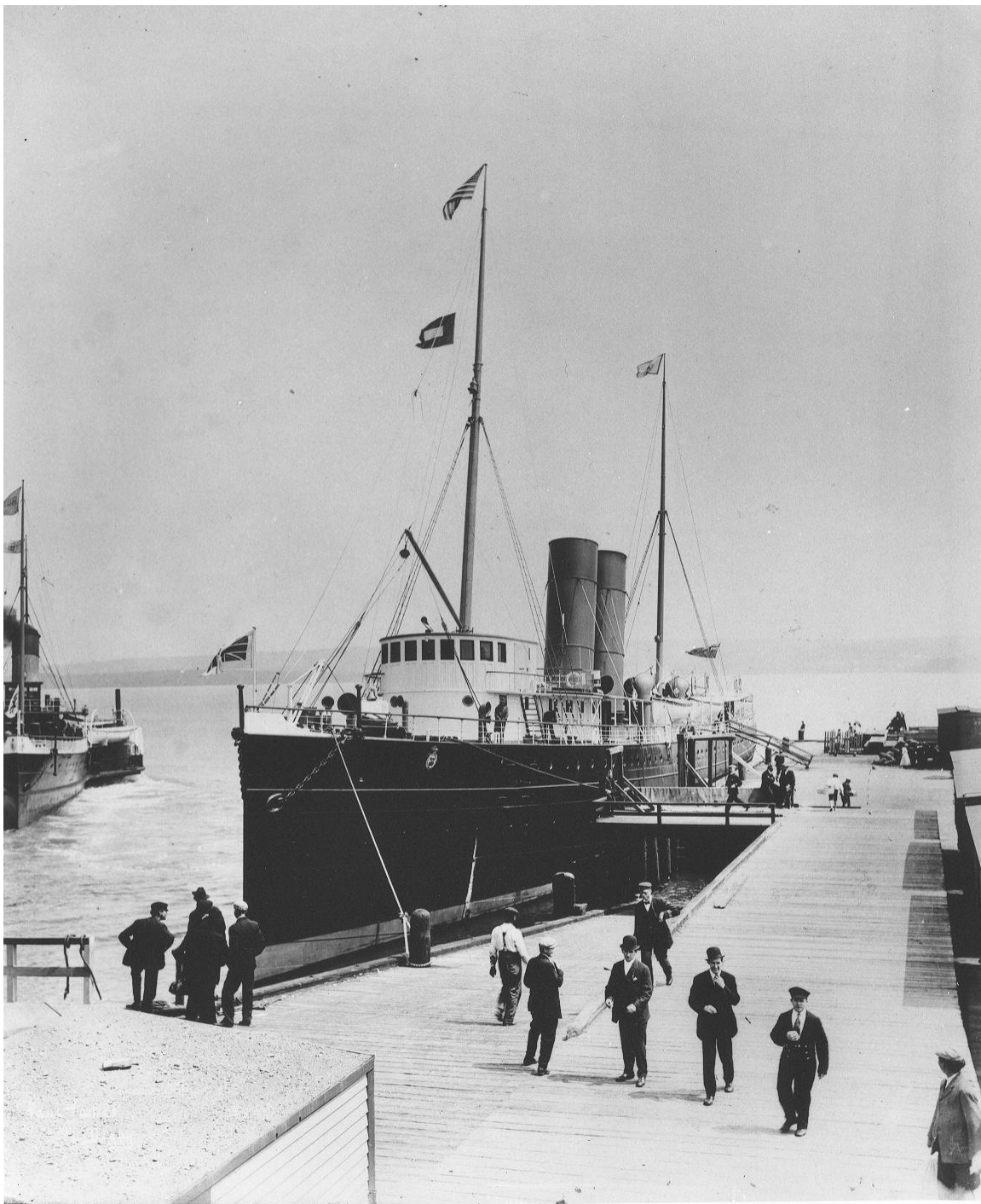
PRINCESS SOPHIA

	VFJ	PRINCESS ENA
NTBW	VFK	TEES
MTPR	VFL	PRINCE ALBERT
HQMK	VFM	PRINCE JOHN
VTPN	VFN	MORWENNA
HDVN	VFO	BESSIE DOLLAR
	VFP	BARGE EMPIRE
	VFQ	ALBERTA
	VFR	BARGE PROVIDENCE
	VFS	BOSTON



Nova Scotia Museum

SS BOSTON



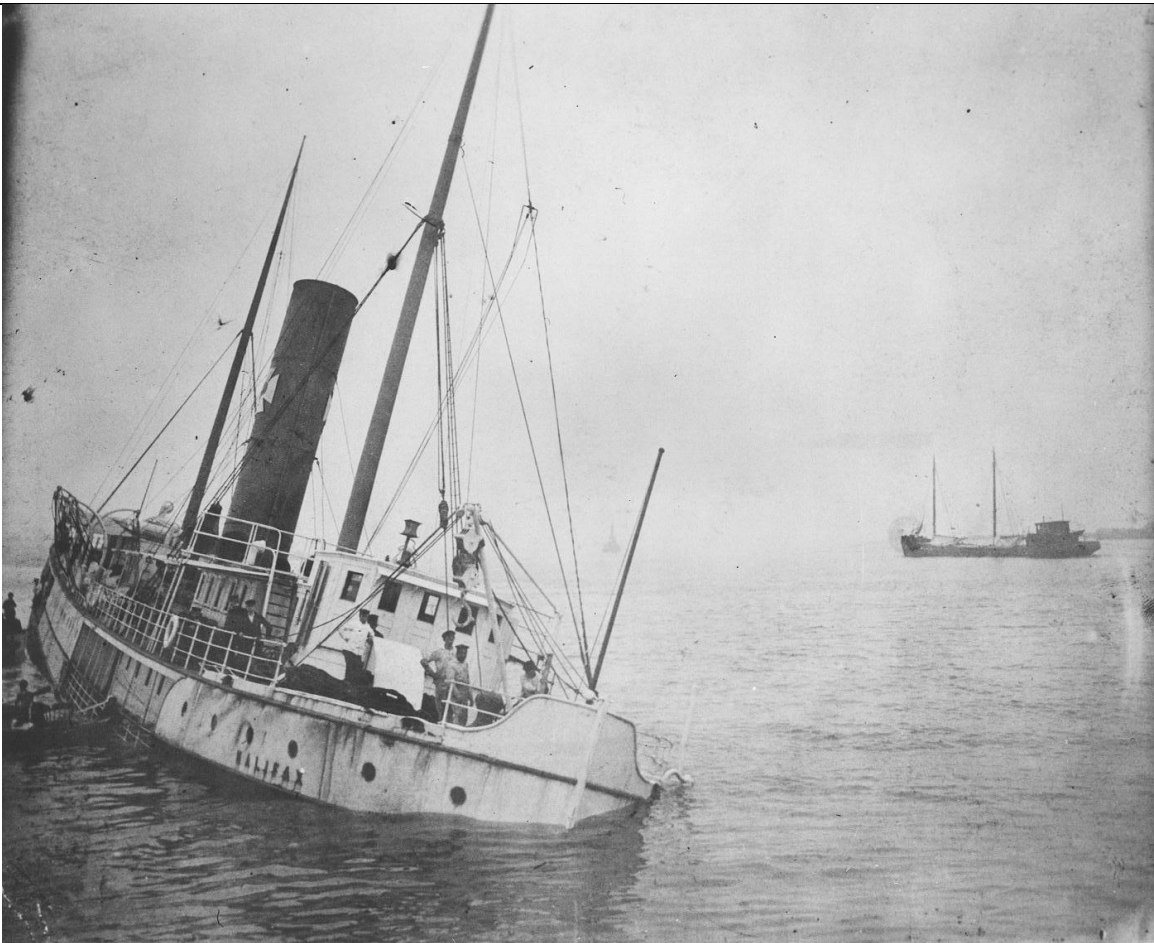
Nova Scotia Museum

SS BOSTON at Digby, Nova Scotia, 1915



C. R. Spracklin

This is Ted Strickland, Wireless Operator SS HALIFAX or sister ship of Plant Line plying between Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Boston, Massachusetts, prior to 1912.



Nova Scotia Museum

SS HALIFAX

	VFU	AUILO
JSCT	VFV	SALVOR
PRBT	VFW	A.W. PERRY
THRL	VFX	LORD STRATHCONA
	VFZ	CAMOSUN
HLTW	VGA	ROYAL GEORGE
HMDG	VGB	ROYAL EDWARD
	VGC	KEEWATIN
	VGD	HAMONIC
	VGE	HURONIC
	VGF	SARONIC
	VGG	ATHABASCA
	VGH	MANITOBA
	VGI	ASSINIBOIA
RMHL	VGJ	PRINCE ARTHUR
QKBS	VGK	PRINCE GEORGE
	VGL	ST. IGNACE
	VGN	CHELOHSIN
KVCR	VGP	HALIFAX
	VGQ	EVERETT G. GRIGGS
	VGR	DOUGLAS H. THOMAS
	VGJ	PRINCESS MAQUINNA
HSNM	VGW	SEAL
	VGW	NORONIC
HQNS	VGX	VENTURE
KLPV	VGY	YARMOUTH
HVDJ	VGZ	PRINCESS PATRICIA

Unfortunately I was unable to locate an old signal book that contained the complete list of flag signal call signs for this fleet.

This is a fascinating fleet mainly because it comes from a different world than the one we know today. Some of these ships were wooden and all were much smaller than the average ship we see today. They were powered by steam engines, and from the photographs they left behind one would think the amount of power they had was in direct proportion to the amount of soot and smoke they blew out their stacks. Many of their whistles sounded more like a high-pitched scream than the loud dull note of the steam whistle heard today. A look inside one of these ships would be most interesting. The most noticeable feature would be the total lack of electronics that is such a big part of a modern ship. This fleet was sailed by a magnetic compass and the use of a sextant to determine their direction or course and position. Quite likely the one item that would impress us most, about this fleet, would be the ship's steering wheel. It had to be fairly large in most cases to provide a lot of leverage in order to steer these ships. All had to be steered continuously by one or more of the seamen because automatic steering, auto pilots, were a long way off in the future. Many ships today do not have a steering wheel as such, just a small lever less than a foot long. Most ships that are fitted with a steering wheel today have one that is smaller than the average automobile steering wheel.

The life of a wireless operator in one of these ships would be like a dream to us. The total lack of stations ashore, other than those you and you alone could hear, would make you the centre of attraction for news outside the ship. This of course was why these operators were looked upon as a special group. You can see from the list of this fleet that our practice of splitting the call sign allotments to signify a certain type of ship commenced with these first assignments. The VD prefix call signs are government ships. Few of these ships saw action during World War I although there were 2,479 merchant vessels and 670 fishing vessels registered in the United Kingdom, sunk from enemy action, in just over four years of this war. NIOBE and RAINBOW performed useful patrol work. A fleet of smaller craft and fishing trawlers did minesweeping

and anti-submarine patrols in coastal waters. But that was the extent of the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet with the exception of two American built submarines that patrolled the West Coast off British Columbia. The personnel of the Royal Canadian Navy reached the figure of six thousand during this war, but mainly in British and not Canadian ships. Since this war was the war to end all wars, right afterwards our government did as much as possible to totally ignore a Navy or anything fitting that description.

There were twelve ships registered in Newfoundland that were fitted with wireless in 1915 as follow:

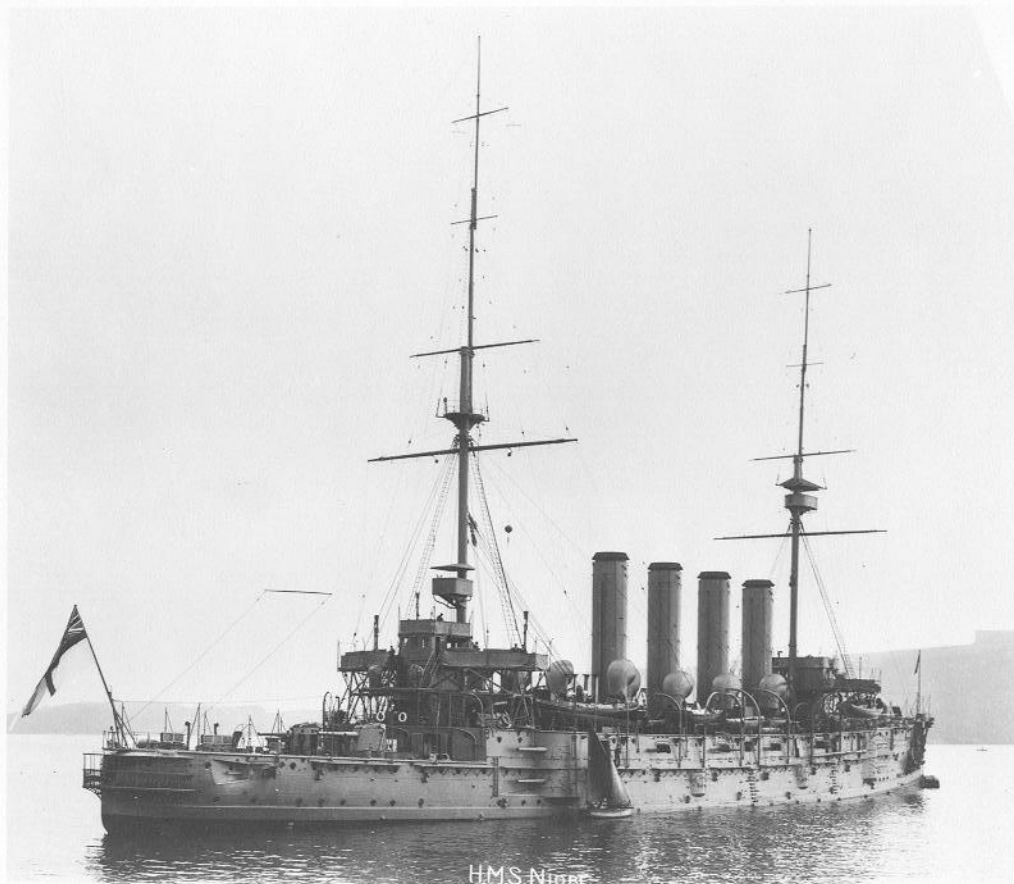
Flag	Radio	Name
TQND	VOK	ADVENTURE
TQNL	VOM	BELLAVENTURE
TQNP	VON	BEOTHIC
TQNM	VOO	BONAVENTURE
TWLM	VOP	BRUCE
	VOQ	INVERMORE
JCGB	VOR	KYLE
	VOS	LINTROSE
JHMQ	VOT	NASCOPIE
NTKM	VOU	EAGLE
MCBP	VOW	NEWFOUNDLAND
MJQC	VOX	NEPTUNE

At the outbreak of World War I Camperdown had been equipped with a new and modern receiver that used a carborundum crystal and was capable of tuning between 200 and 3000 meters (1500 and 100 khz). Dr. Lee DeForest applied for a patent on the three-element vacuum tube on October 25th, 1906, and these were known as an Audion for some time. The first receiver containing one of these tubes (Audion) was not placed in service at Camperdown until 1918.

THE HALIFAX EXPLOSION

On December 6th, 1917, the French munitions ship MONT BLANC, carrying benzine on her upper deck, pitric acid, gun cotton and nitro glycerine (T.N.T.) in her holds was proceeding into Halifax. MONT BLANC was a floating bomb. At the narrows she collided with the Norwegian Ship IMO that was carrying relief supplies for the war victims of Belgium. This caused the benzine on the MONT BLANC to catch fire and roughly twenty minutes later caused the TNT to explode. This explosion nearly wiped Halifax off the map and the total count of those injured or killed was impossible to calculate. The estimates were placed at 2,000 killed, 2,000 wounded, and 6,000 homeless.

Many of the ships in Halifax harbour were destroyed, but others received little or no damage. HMCS NIOBE was alongside Halifax at the time of the explosion and George Harris was her operator. George was coming down a ladder at the time of the explosion and was blown to the deck but received no serious injury. NIOBE was only slightly damaged and her wireless equipment was not harmed.



Public Archives Canada DB-4171

HMCS NIOBE

This explosion was felt at the Camperdown station for about ten seconds but did not cause any damage. The wire lines into the city were put out of service and stayed out until late on the evening of December 7th when a telephone connection was established with the Dockyard. Camperdown was able to communicate with HMCS NIOBE and the other coast stations in the area that provided communications with the outside world. December 6th had been a beautiful clear sunny winter day but a blizzard started in the evening. This storm created a lot of static that increased the communication difficulties.

CAMPERDOWN SIGNAL STATION WORLD WAR I

The old Camperdown Signal Station, that by this time had been over one hundred years in continuous use, carried on during World War I as it had for these past one hundred years. For some years previous to this war it had been communicating with ships via the International Code of Signals and was communicating to the various offices around Halifax by the telephone. The staff was controlled by and made up of members of the Canadian Army. The increased activity created by the war was the only noticeable change.

NAVAL WIRELESS OPERATORS WORLD WAR I

At the time these wireless stations were taken over by the Naval Service of the Canadian Government, many of the operators involved were made Wireless Operator Telegraphists in the Royal Canadian Navy, such as it was, a branch of the British or Royal Navy. We had put an effort into forming a Navy, but still had only two old British Cruisers HMCS RAINBOW and HMCS NIOBE. Both retained their original British names. These two had been purchased in 1910 with RAINBOW going to the West Coast and

NIOBE remaining in HALIFAX. Both ships were not in use at the outbreak of the war and the Royal Canadian Navy (a title given by direction of the King in 1911) included only 336 officers and men.



H. H. Brennan

This is Ernie Wood on the left and Harris Brennan as Wireless Operator Telegraphists R.N.C.V.R. HMCS STADACONA in August 1915.

Michael Christie published an excellent history of the Barrington Passage Wireless Station in 2002. On page 73 of this book he describes the naval telegraphists.

On 29 January 1916, a government Order in Council (P.C. 162) was passed establishing a rank to be known as "Wireless Operator" in the Royal Naval Canadian Volunteer Reserve. There were six grades described.

Chief W/T Operator

1st Class W/T Operator
2nd Class W/T Operator
3rd Class W/T Operator
4th Class W/T Operator
Learner

The Chief W/T Operator was to rank as a non-executive Chief Warrant Officer and the remaining grades to rank as non-executive Warrant Officers.

Chief W/T Operator – Wings of Mercury and 1 RNCVR stripe without the curl below

1st Class W/T Operator – Wings of Mercury with 3 stars below
2nd Class W/T Operator – Wings of Mercury with 2 stars below
3rd Class W/T Operator – Wings of Mercury with 1 star below
4th Class W/T Operator – Wings of Mercury
Learner – Wings of Mercury

The cap badges were to be the same as for non-executive Warrant Officers.

I have seen many photographs of these operators and the best, showing this uniform is the one above of Ernie Wood and Harris Brennan. This appears to be the same uniform in all the photographs I have seen with the exception the cap was navy blue in winter and a white shirt with a winged collar was worn on dress occasions. The cap badge appears to be the regular naval officers cap badge of the period, although I have seen a couple of them wearing a cap badge without the large gold leaf on either side of the anchor. This would appear to be after this Order in Council and it would appear that these Wireless Telegraphist Operators removed this officer badge and their uniforms were changed according to the above list. This photograph of Wood and Brennan was taken six months before this Order in Council. I have seen the Wings of Mercury on the lower sleeve with this cap badge. I have seen the cap badge without the gold leaf either side of the anchor and with the Wings of Mercury on each lapel.

It appears as though all the Wireless Operator Telegraphists during World War I served in the Royal Navy Canadian Volunteer Reserve. As near as I can tell all of the men who served as Wireless Operator Telegraphists in the Canadian Navy during World War I had been operators with Marconi before the war and retired from various positions within the Department of Transport. They all held the regular Certificate of Proficiency in Radio issued from the London Convention of 1912 as near as I can tell. The majority of these Wireless Operator Telegraphists were stationed at Barrington Passage at one time or the other during their naval career.

BARRINGTON PASSAGE VAL

The greatest change in marine communications during this war, in Nova Scotia, was the erection of a large new radio station at Barrington Passage (the southwestern tip of Nova Scotia). This station went into service in 1915 and was a joint venture undertaken by the Canadian Government and the British Admiralty (British Navy). This station was to maintain contact with the naval vessels patrolling off New York and other large American cities. These naval vessels were trying to seal off these ports and prevent the many German ships caught there from breaking out and returning to Germany.

In his attempt to record this history of marine communications, Alf Lawton stated that the Barrington station opened using call code TS. Phil Dodds was one of the first operators at the Barrington station and recorded this as the station's call code many times in a journal that he kept. This makes little sense because this station opened three years after Canada was assigned the block of call signs from VAA to VGZ from the London Radio Conference of 1912, and was one year after Spracklin's experience in the DURLEY CHIME that I have recorded elsewhere in this exercise.

I had several interviews with both Mr. Spracklin and Mr. Reay Bridger and we discussed the Barrington station during these interviews. Both were former operators at this station and both stated the call sign was

VAL and they did not mention any other call code or call sign. I simply assumed VAL was the one and only call sign assigned to this station.

Michael Christie brought the call code TS to my attention twenty-five years after my interviews with Mr. Spracklin and Mr. Bridger. This is the reason I wanted to learn this history because so much of what we did in Canada seemed to make so little sense. All four of these men, Lawton, Dodds, Spracklin and Bridger, had operated the Barrington station.

The Barrington station definitely used call code TS and call sign VAL. The only call sign that makes sense is the VAL call sign. As you can see this sort of thing was going on throughout the history of marine communications for this area and started at the very beginning when these stations first opened.

The Barrington station contained three spark transmitters. One was a Poulson 25 kilowatt arc, one a 10 kilowatt asynchronous, and the other a 5 kilowatt asynchronous. The receiver was a very reliable British Admiralty (Navy) type RR receiver using some kind of regeneration and fewer than three or four tubes. The power supply to this equipment was one 1500 AHC (Ampere Hour Capacity) battery with sixty glass cells each weighing five hundred pounds, and one DC (Direct Current) to AC (Alternating Current) motor-generator converter which produced 120 volts 300 amps and 500 volts 45 amps. With these units Barrington was capable of putting about 38 HWA (Hot Wire Amps) into the aerial.

This made for a very imposing station and those who had the pleasure of operating it were very proud of the results. The operating position was housed in a lead-lined room to protect the operators on duty from the high voltages in use. Two of these operators were Reay Bridger and Cyril R. "Sprack" Spracklin as mentioned. They were able to communicate easily as far away as the Azores and one time Reay managed a two-way contact with a ship just leaving the English Channel. He did this on 2400 meters or 125 kilohertz in modern terminology. This contact also proved the naval receiver was pulling its share of the weight in making the station most efficient. The actual signals from the station had a very good tone, every bit as clear as a tube transmitter, according to Reay.

The aerials were mounted on two towers three hundred twenty-five feet high. These towers were three hundred foot steel towers with twenty-five foot wooden extensions.

After the war no useful excuse for maintaining this station was found so it was closed in September 1922. The general public was more than ready to get rid of anything pertaining to this war and do their best to forget it as soon as possible.

Michael Christie produced a record of this station in 2002 titled "The Barrington Passage Wireless Station". ISBN0-9687472-1-3

This book is an excellent record of this station with a lot of photographs.



C. R. Spracklin

These are the first operators at Barrington VAL sitting on the steps to the Operations Building. They are left to right: E.D. Hayman, A.E. Argue, A.T. Lawton, G.F. Harris and C.R. Spracklin.



C.R. Spracklin

This is the Barrington Passage Wireless Station with call "TS" and VAL during World War I.



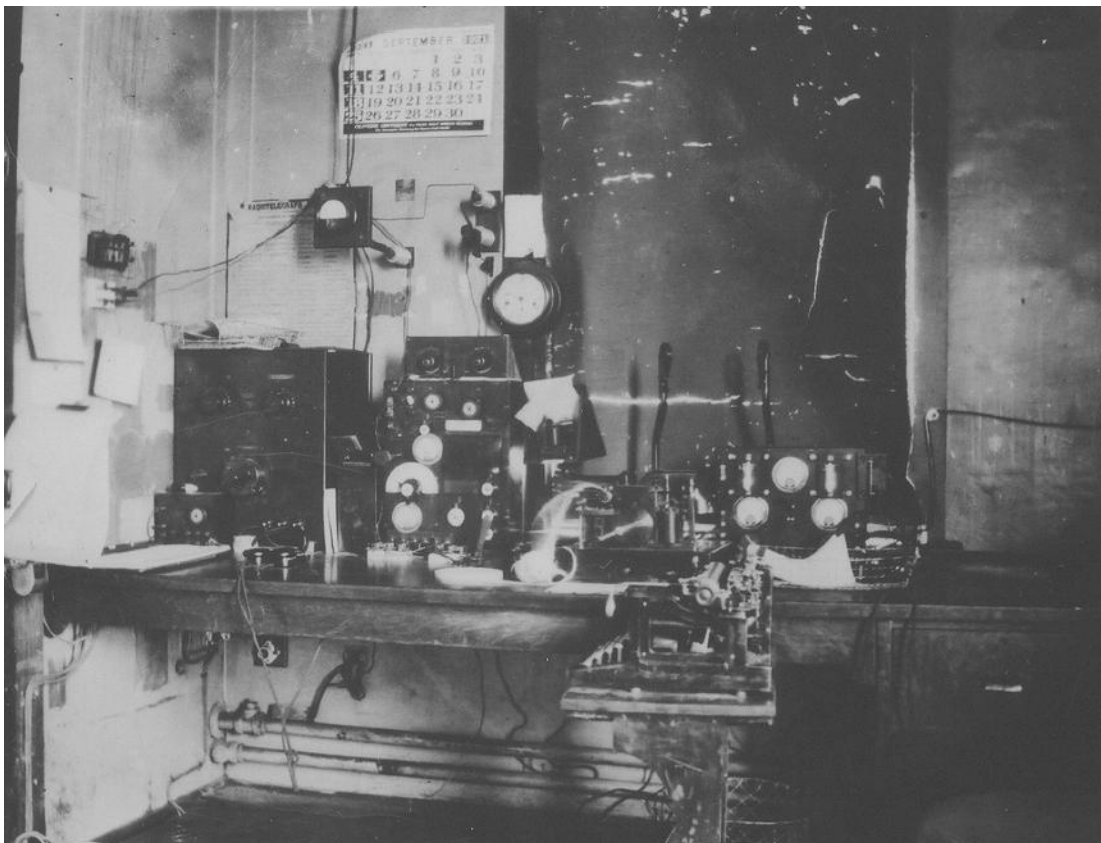
C.R. Spracklin

This is the operations building Barrington Passage during World War I.



C.R. Spracklin

These are the two 325 foot high towers at Barrington Passage VAL during World War I.

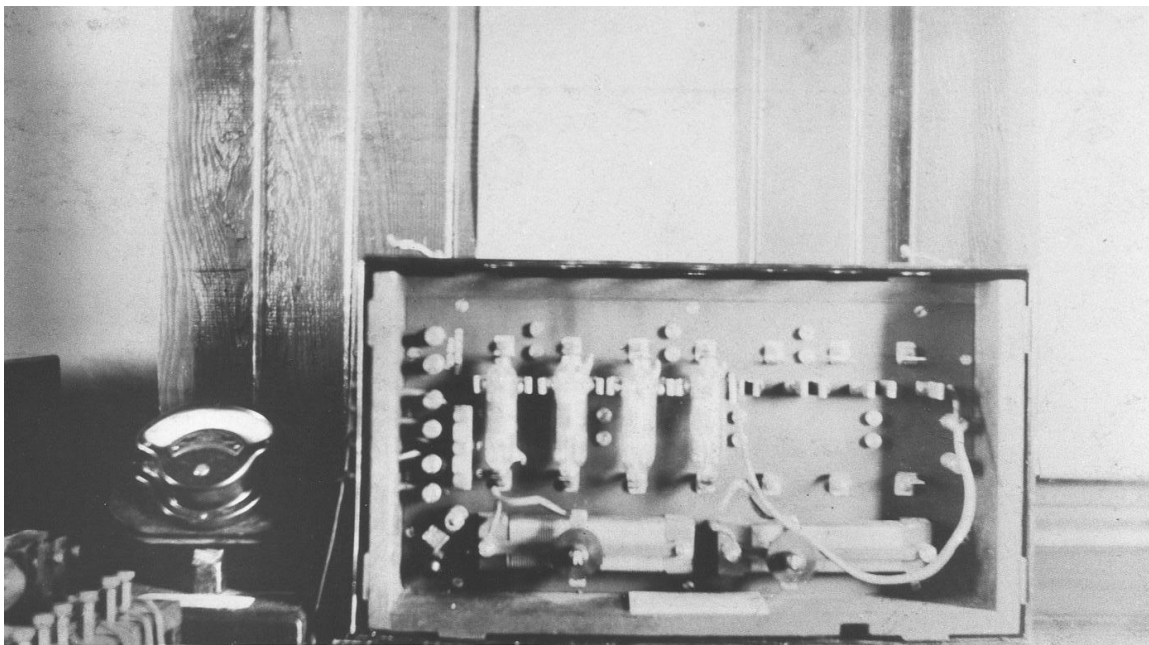


H.H. Brennan

This is the operating position at Barrington Passage VAL taken shortly after the station closed in 1922. This is the office that was lead lined to protect the operators from the high voltages in use.

CHEBUCTO VAV

Barrington was not the only station to make a deep impression in the history of marine communications for this area. Another station was erected which was to be the first of many such famous stations around our coast. In 1909 two Italian inventors, Bellini and Tosi, perfected their famous radio direction finding system. Radio Direction Finding is a specially equipped radio receiver capable of determining the direction of any signal heard. The first of these stations erected in Canada was at Chebucto Head in the approaches to Halifax Harbour, according to Reay Bridger and Sprack Spracklin. Alf Lawton stated the date each of these stations opened around eastern Canada and that they all opened in 1918 or 1919. The Camperdown station was located on a hill just inside this point and was visible to this new station. The Chebucto Head D/F station was assigned call sign VAV and was wholly owned and operated by the Canadian Government through the Department of Fisheries. VAV Chebucto in 1918 had British Admiralty (Navy) direction finding equipment. This equipment used a carborundum for the receiver, but used tubes for high frequency and audio amplifiers. It also had a long wave (low frequency) receiver using tubes that was replaced by a Marconi 55F Receiver with cascade amplifier. VAV Chebucto took these radio direction-finding bearings on the frequency of 800 meters (375 kilohertz).



Reay Bridger

This is a Marconi 55F Receiver and the photograph was taken in 1923.



Reay Bridger

This is the operating position at Chebucto DF/VAV in 1920.



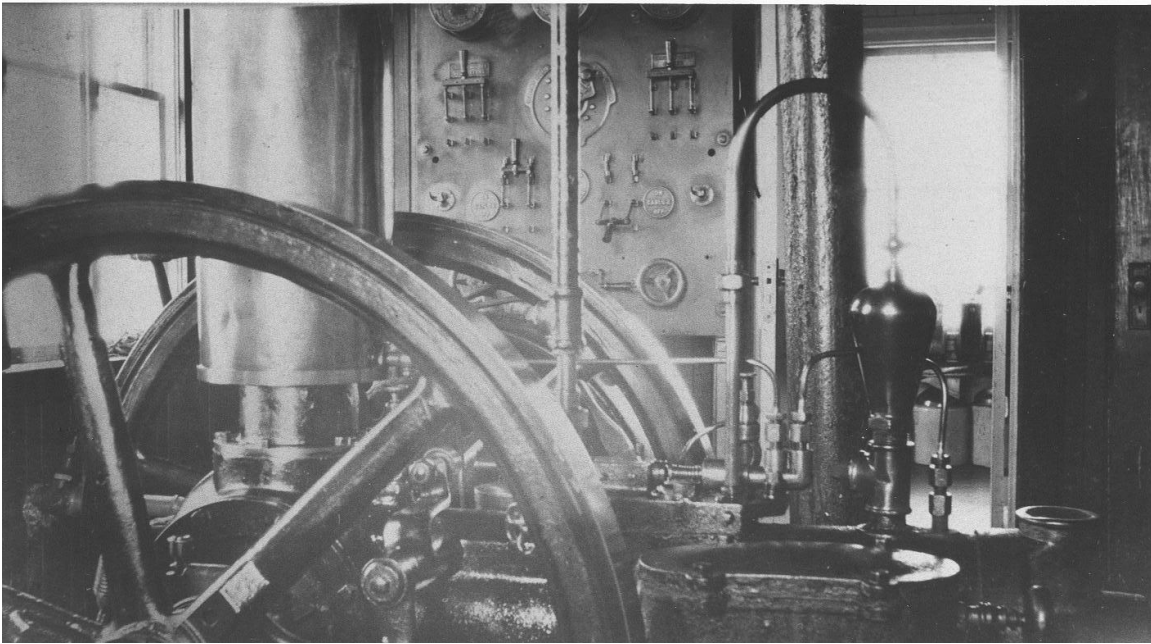
Reay Bridger

Chebucto DF/VAV 1920



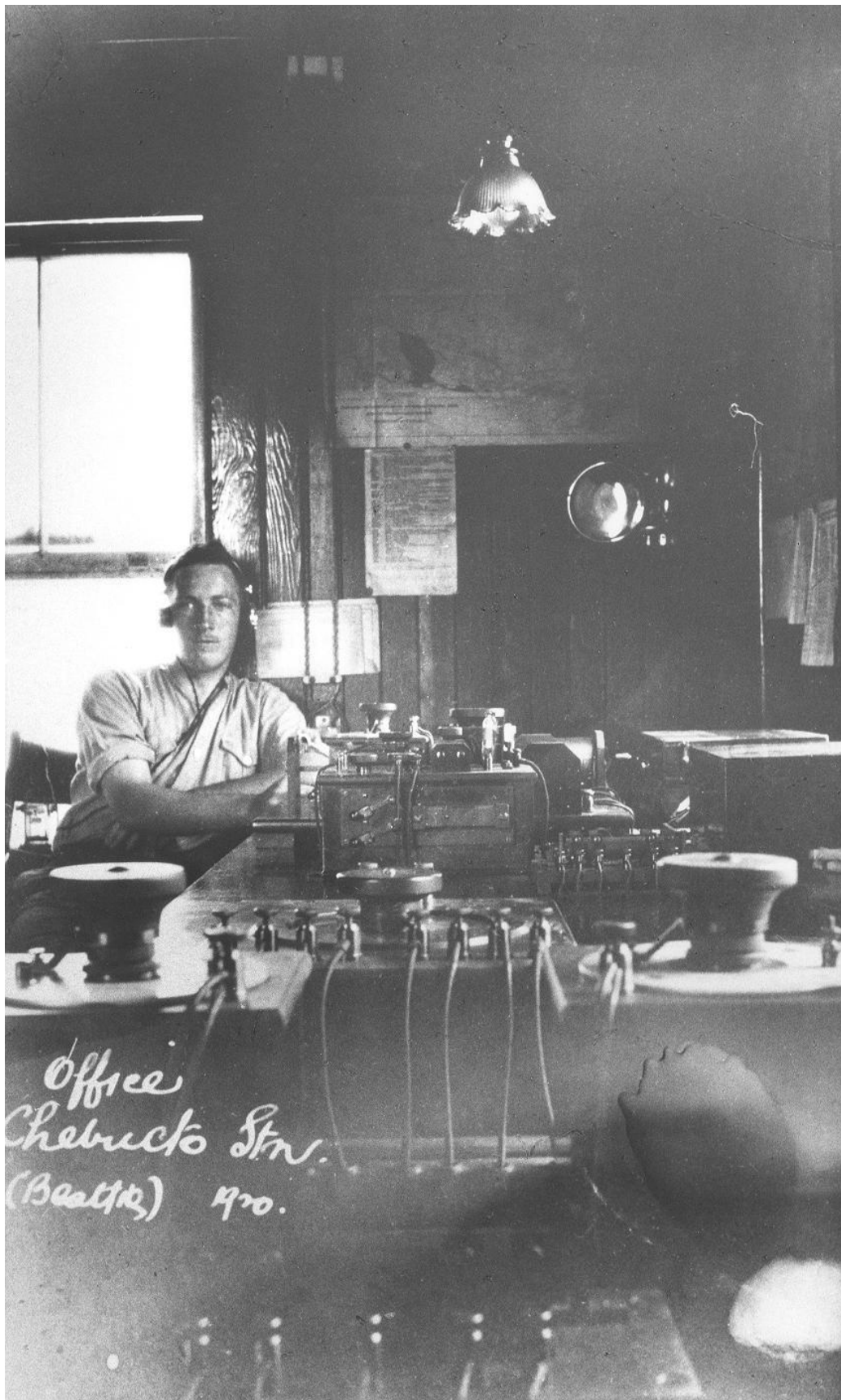
Warren E. Hagar

This is the Chebucto Head DF station VAV 1927.



Reay Bridger

This is the Chebucto DF/VAV Motor Generator and Battery Room in background 1920.



Reay Bridger

This is Earle Beattie operating Chebucto DF/VAV in 1920.



Warren E. Hagar

This is Warren Hagar operating Chebucto VAV in 1926.



Warren Hagar

This is Gerry Gard operating Chebucto VAV.

SUBMARINE SIGNALING

One would think that this radio direction finding would have been the first electronic navigational aid (the term used today) to be constructed, but there was at least one other before this. The other was known, and rightly so, as Submarine Signaling. This navigational aid was a system of ringing bells about eighteen feet below the surface of the sea. It was a system designed and owned by the Submarine Signal Company,

Boston, Massachusetts, and the equipment necessary for its operation was retained by them and leased to the various organizations that used it. According to the records I was able to locate on this, it was considered highly accurate and it appeared to be favoured over and above radio direction finding for accuracy. Radio direction finders were mandatory on vessels until the radio officer was replaced with satellite communications. I know of no submarine bell system now in use. Naturally the reason radio direction finders were mandatory is that they provided a means of locating a vessel in distress. With the knowledge we have accumulated over the years from below the surface of the oceans; the way sound is distorted by various currents, temperature changes, and so on by water, this system must have been found not as reliable as one would assume from the records I located. There is a record that the United States Lighthouse Board found this submarine signaling system so accurate that in June and July of 1906, it ordered these bells on five lightships to be rung continuously day and night.

The approaches to Halifax were equipped with three of these units. During the summer months there were two, both were buoys, one off Chebucto Head and the other off Sambro. During the winter months there was only one fitted on the Sambro Lightship. These buoys were a self-contained unit. The bell rang by a mechanical device from the motion of the water. They rang continuously except during periods of dead calm and since dead calm is practically unknown off Halifax the “ding-a-lings” rang nearly steady. In heavy seas the bell rang as often as every five seconds but eight waves per minute six inches high would cause the bell to ring six times every minute. Because of the mechanical device the force of the blow on the bell was not dependent on the motion of the water, therefore the strength of the bell signal remained the same no matter the condition of the sea or water the buoy was anchored.

The bells hung below the lightships were activated by compressed air, requiring three cubic feet of air at a pressure of twenty-five pounds per cubic inch to strike the bell one hundred blows. The Submarine Signal Company provided either a compressor or a compressor complete with motor to any installation that required one, the other, or both.

The ship’s receiver was leased by the Submarine Signal Company and this consisted of two cast iron receiver tanks, four microphone transmitters, one direction indicator box fitted with two standard telephone receivers (the long bell shaped instrument of the era), and one battery box containing four dry cells. Installing this equipment did not require dry-docking because it did not involve drilling any hole through the ship’s hull. The two cast iron receiver tanks were installed next to the ship’s hull down in the bottom of the forward part of the ship. Each tank contained two of the four microphone transmitters which formed two paired sets normally designated “A” and “B” for identification purposes. This duplication not only insured a reserve set but insured accuracy with one set providing a check against the other. The direction indicator box, which was mounted on the bridge or in the chart room, containing the two telephone receivers could switch either receiver to one of the four microphone transmitters. These switches also provided an indication of which receiver was switched to which transmitter, thereby the operator would have an indication of which transmitter was providing the louder signal. This comparison of the intensity of the received signal determined its position in relation to the bell. By 1917 over 1400 ships were fitted with this apparatus and upwards of 150 bells were “ding-a-linging” around the world. At 10:55 PM on March 27th, 1908, the Canadian Pacific passenger Liner EMPRESS OF IRELAND with call sign MPL called Camperdown MHX and the log entry reads:

“PL says he heard Submarine bells 17 miles off”.

If these bells could be heard consistently at that range, they would have been an important navigational aid.

DIRECTION FINDERS

Shortly after the Chebucto Direction Finding Station entered service a number of such stations that were to see nearly a half-century of service to all forms of shipping were erected around this coast. All these stations were owned by the Canadian Government and operated by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. They made their initial contact with a ship desiring a bearing to be taken from the ship’s transmission on 600 meters (500-kHz) and then shifted and took these bearings on 800 meters (375-kHz).

On July 31st, 1923, the Canadian East Coast direction finding stations, with their range in miles, were as follows:

VAX	Canso, Nova Scotia	150 miles
VAZ	Cape Race, Newfoundland	250 miles
VAV	Chebucto, Nova Scotia	150 miles
VAR	Saint John, New Brunswick	250 miles
VAT	St. Paul Island, Nova Scotia	250 miles

Our American cousins south of the border called these stations Radio Compass Stations. They were much the same as ours. Our practice of calling them D/F or direction finding stations is just one of the many quirks we have adopted within the English language. American terminology is just as accurate as ours, possibly more colourful in this particular case.

Since the weather in this area often reduces the visibility to nothing, the operators on these direction-finding stations became very proficient. Many ships were navigated in and out of the area with only the bearings from these operators to guide them.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the Direction Finder Equipment at St. Paul's Island during the 1920's.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the operating position at St. Paul's Direction Finding Station VAT in 1925.



Reay Bridger

This is the operating position at Cape Race D/F Newfoundland VAZ in 1919.

THE FIRST CERTIFICATES

The earliest record that I was able to locate making it mandatory for ships to be fitted with wireless and carry a wireless operator was that for 1917. Perhaps there is no difference between this and the ruling made in 1912, only five years previous. Therefore a sample of the questions and answers for prospective wireless operators pertaining to this ruling not only make these regulations self explanatory but provides much interest for we today. This sample is as follows:

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Questions and Answers re Signaling

Q- To what ships, does the Convention apply?

A- According to Article 2, the ship's carrying more than 12 passengers which proceed from one foreign port to another, or ships proceeding to and from any ports in the British Dominions abroad.

Q- Are any vessels exempt from these regulations providing they carry 12 or more passengers?

A- Yes, but only in cases of vessels being obliged to carry 12 or more passengers by reasons of force majeure or in the case of ship wrecked or other persons.

Q- Is there any obligation upon a ship master to report the sighting of ice or derelicts?

A- Yes. He is obliged to do so by all means at his disposal to all ships in the vicinity, and to the first point of the coast at which he can communicate.

Q- Is there any special method of so communicating this information?

A- Yes. A special code appears in the Regulations which enables the information to be sent in a uniform manner.

Q- What is the obligation of a master when ice is reported on or near the course of his vessel?

A- He must alter his course to go well clear of the danger and proceed at a moderate speed.

Q- What ships are obliged to carry Morse signaling lamps?

A- All vessels carrying 12 or more passengers to and from foreign or colonial ports.

Q- Are there any restrictions with reference to the making of International Distress Signals by vessels not in distress?

A- Such signals are prohibited. The use of private signals which are liable to be confused with distress signals are also prohibited.

Q- What new regulations are to come into force in addition to these already existing for Preventing Collisions at Sea?

A- A second white masthead light is to be made compulsory, a permanent fixed stern light to be compulsory, a special day signal for motor vessels to be compulsory and a special sound signal is to be established for use by a vessel in tow.

Q- Suppose the tow consists of more than one vessel?

A- In such event, the signal will be made by the last vessel of the tow.

Q- What signal has been added to the existing distress signals?

A- S.O.S., the International Wireless Distress Signal, has been added to the list of both day and night signals.

Q- Is it compulsory for all vessels to carry a wireless installation?

A- No, providing that they have not more than 50 persons on board, including passengers and crew.

Q- Supposing a vessel had, including deck, engine-room and steward staff, 52 persons on board, would she be compelled to carry wireless?

A- Yes. The regulation applies to 50 persons in all, irrespective of their ratings.

Q- Are there any exceptions to the foregoing regulation?

A- Yes, in the event of a ship being obliged to carry more than 50 persons on board, through causes over which the master has no control.

Q- What other ships are exempt?

A- Ships that do not go more than 150 sea miles from the nearest coast, or ships where the crews are temporarily increased beyond fifty, provided that the limits of latitude do not exist 30 degrees north and 30 degrees south.

Q- What other vessels?

A- Sailing vessels of primitive build, such as dhows, junks, etc., if it is practically impossible to equip them with wireless.

Q- How are ships carrying wireless installations rated? (The reason for the second-class, second-class counter signed for ships of the second category and the first-class certificate of proficiency in radio.)

A- In three classes; the first, second and third class.

Q- What are first class ships?

A- Ships which are intended to carry 25 or more passengers, ships which have an average speed of 15 knots, or if they have more than 15 knots, providing 200 persons or more are carried, and that, in the course of their voyage, they go more than 500 sea miles between any two consecutive ports.

Q- What are termed second class ships?

A- Ships having a wireless service of limited duration, or ships which are intended to carry 25 or more passengers.

Q- What is meant by continuous service in first class ships?

A- Ships having a constant wireless watch.

Q- What wireless watch may be kept in second class ships?

A- A continuous watch of, at least, seven hours a day, and a watch of ten minutes at the beginning of every other hour.

Q- What are third class ships?

A- Ships which have no fixed period of wireless service.

Q- What are certificated watchers?

A- Persons qualified and holding certificates to prove that they are capable of understanding the wireless distress and safety signals.

Q- In addition to the usual wireless installations, are vessels obliged to carry any other installation?

A- Yes. An emergency installation worked from an independent source for at least six hours.

Q- Are there any ships exempt from carrying an emergency installation?

A- Yes, providing that the normal installation has a range of 100 sea miles.

Q- Is it obligatory for ships to render assistance to vessels in distress?

A- Yes, it is compulsory, and the master of the vessel in distress has a right to call any ship or ships which are considered best able to render his assistance.

Q- What is the Safety Signal?

A- T T T.

Q- What is the Distress Signal?

A- S O S.



Public Archives Canada PA-21365

SS CANADA

Q- Are there any other means of making the Urgent and Important Signals except by blasts on the whistle?

A- Yes, they may be made by the Morse lamps during the night or by hand flags during the day.

Q- Supposing that we are going to make a Nationality Signal, what signal should precede it?

A- The Preparative Signal. (I assume this means via flags.)

Q- What ships are obliged to carry the code of Urgent and Important Signals?

A- Every ship afloat.

As can be seen from these questions, they pertain to the actual operation of communications. It was necessary for persons operating wireless telegraph apparatus to hold either a first or second class certificate of competency in accordance with article ten of the regulations annexed to the International Radiotelegraph Convention. The certificates would certify that the operator:

- A. was able to send and receive by sound, messages in plain language in the International Morse Code at a rate of not fewer than twenty words per minute (five letters being counted as one word) for a first class certificate; and,
- B. was able to send and receive by sound, messages in plain language in the International Morse Code at a rate of from twelve to nineteen words per minute (five letters being counted as one word) for a second class certificate; and,
- C. was able to adjust the apparatus ordinarily used in some well-known system of wireless telegraph so as to suit the varying conditions of working, without using excessive transmitting power; and,
- D. had an efficient working knowledge of the regulations applicable to the exchange of radiotelegraphic traffic.

Candidates were expected:

- A. to send on an ordinary Morse key for five consecutive minutes at not less than the prescribed speed. The accuracy of signaling, the correct formation of the letters, and the correctness of spacing were taken into account;
- B. to receive and write legibly at the prescribed speed from a double headgear telephone receiver as ordinarily used for radiotelegraphic reception;
- C. to understand simple diagrams of the electrical connections of the apparatus used in the system in which he was being examined;
- D. to be able to connect up the apparatus with the help of such diagrams so far as this was required in the system in which he was being examined;
- E. to name the principal parts of the apparatus and indicate their use;
- F. to mention the most common faults, and the means usually taken to remedy them in the system in which he was being examined;
- G. to explain the steps taken to change from one wave length to another, in sending and receiving, in the system in which he was being examined.

The practical examinations included the following:

- A. Connecting up the apparatus.
- B. Operating (sending and receiving).
- C. Regulating and adjusting.
- D. Altering the wave length.
- E. Reducing or increasing the transmitting power.
- F. Tracing and clearing faults.

The examination in regard to the actual transmission of messages was based upon the rules laid down by the federal government, mainly an exact copy of those as laid down by the British Postmaster-General.

Candidates for examination were required to pay an examination fee. If the candidate satisfactorily passed the examination, he was required to make a declaration that he would observe the secrecy of radio telegrams that came to his knowledge in the course of duty. In case of failure, the candidate was not ordinarily permitted to be re-examined, until after the lapse of three months. An additional fee was payable in respect of the further examination. The holder of a certificate of competency could have his certificate endorsed or suspended if he proved to be negligent or if he failed to comply with the provisions of the International Radiotelegraph Convention and Regulations, or any other regulation that had been issued from time to time for his guidance.

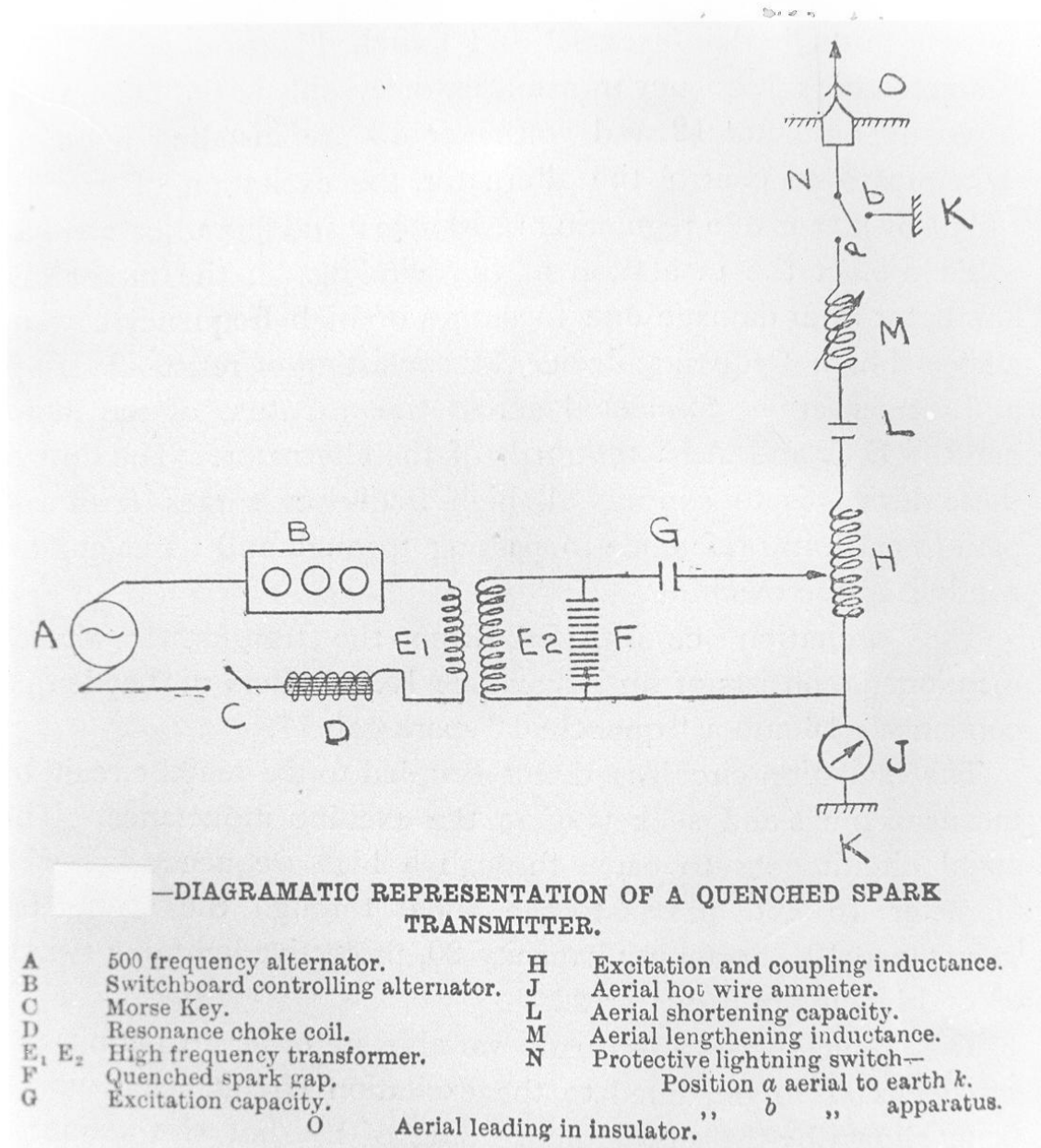
These first or spark certificates lasted until the year 1928. In 1929 anyone who had obtained his certificate during 1928 or before, had to report to an examination office and be examined for the new continuous wave certificates.

QUENCHED GAP SPARK

The first wireless telegraphy signals were those of spark transmission, but before this type of transmission became obsolete there was an improved version which was to be the last of this type of transmission. This improved version was known as the Quenched Spark System. This actually lasted until World War II when the majority of our famous Park Ships (a fleet of 180 merchant ships built and operated by Canadians) were fitted with these units for emergency transmitters, although the laws had been changed making spark illegal for normal use. To this day the law clearly states that any means of transmission on any frequency may be used for distress communication (anything that will attract assistance).

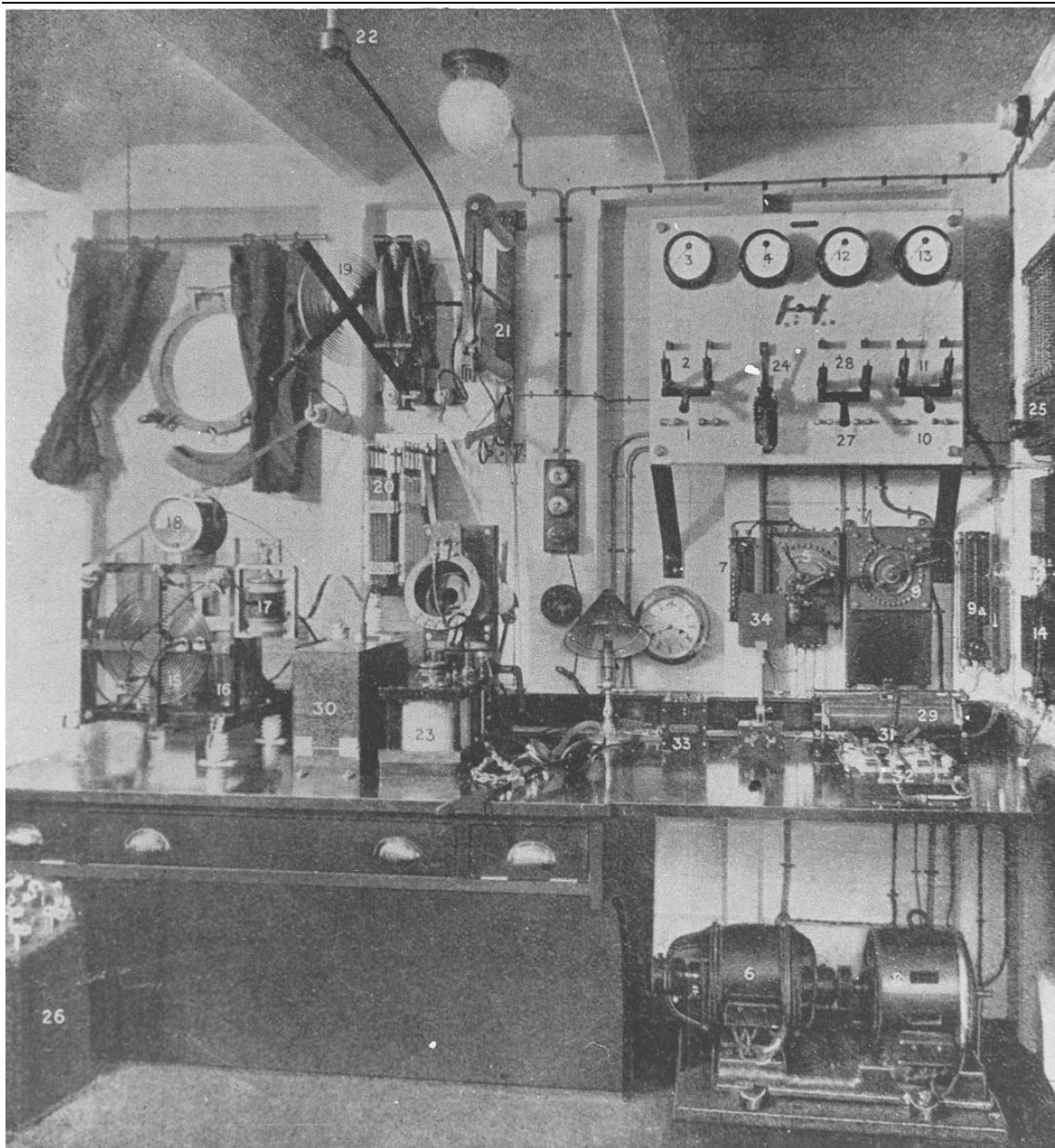
The Quenched Spark System (also known as Quenched Gap Spark) was discovered as early as 1903 but was not fitted in British merchant ships until 1911 when first fitted by the Siemens Brothers Company Limited. This company is another of the famous wireless companies that is still operating and manufacture a lot of hearing aids in 2007, among other things.

The spark system of transmission involved one oscillation circuit, whereas the quenched spark system involved two oscillation circuits. One involved the antenna and the other was located in the transmitter. Feeding back some of the oscillations of the output or antenna circuit into the input circuit increased the output of the transmitter, especially when this feedback was quenched – applying more of the signal to the output.



John Rae VE1AGN from Brown's Signal Book 1917

A number of improvements resulted from this quenched spark signal. Higher output was but one. The ordinary spark signal radiated only 25 to 33 percent of the energy supplied by the transmitter, whereas this quenched signal radiated as much as 50 to 75 percent of the energy supplied by the transmitter. Another important asset was the smaller gap required for the spark. These units were much quieter than the ordinary spark transmitters. They actually radiated a 1000 cycle (hertz in modern terminology) musical tone that made them much easier to copy through natural static and interference.



John Rae VE1AGN from Brown's Signal Book 1917

This is the Wireless Station in CHINDWIN.



World Ship Photo Library

CHINDWIN

Note the figures on the various components making up CHINDWIN's station. CHINDWIN's wireless call sign was GWG and her flag call was HRVQ. She had been built at Dumbarton, Scotland, in 1916, and was owned by P. Henderson and Company. She was a passenger vessel of 6400 gross tons and operated between Glasgow, Liverpool to Rangoon via Marseilles and Egypt, calling at Palma. This company also operated cargo ships from Glasgow to Brazil, Canada, the United States, and out to New Zealand. I found no record of the CHINDWIN visiting Halifax but her station was much the same as all the shipboard stations at that time.

The source of energy (voltage) for this station was the direct current voltage from the ship's main generators. This was fed through the fuses marked number 1 in the photograph and the switch marked number 2 and from there it went to the starter marked number 5 of the motor marked number 6. The speed of the motor was regulated. By the resistance marked number 7. The ammeter marked number 3 and the voltmeter marked number 4 were installed to control this speed. The speed of the motor was normally 1500 revolutions per minute but was capable of providing a variation of 30 percent above or below the normal speed of revolution, for the regulation of the transmitted signal. This motor drove a high frequency alternator marked number 8 in the photograph that was built upon the inductance principle. This delivered current through the fuses marked 10 and 11 in the photograph to a small highly laminated high frequency transformer that is not visible. A second ammeter marked number 12 and voltmeter marked number 13 were installed upon the switchboard to control the alternator, the excitation of which was varied by means of a regulating resistance marked number 9 and a fine adjustment marked number 9a.

A special high frequency device marked number 14, consisting of resistance lamps and condensers, was connected across the armature of the motor and the D.C. and A.C. terminals of the alternator. This was to protect the insulation of the windings in the motor and alternator from damage due to surges of high frequency current. The purpose of those devices was to provide all high frequency surges an easy path to ground in preference to passing through and damaging the winding of the machine.

The excitation circuit, fed from the transformer already mentioned, consisted of an inductance marked number 15, a battery of leyden jar condensers marked number 16, and a quenched gap marked number 17.

The excitation circuit was direct coupled to the aerial circuit by means of plugs and sockets upon the exciting inductance. The aerial circuit went to ground through a high frequency hot wire ammeter marked

number 18 and passed to the aerial through the variometer inductance marked number 19, shorting capacity marked number 20, protective lightning switch marked number 21, and lead-in insulator marked number 22.

The inductance marked number 19 was made variable in order to permit the aerial circuit to be tuned to the excitation circuit, such tuning being shown by the maximum reading of the hot wire ammeter marked number 18. The arrangements of the various components are shown schematically in the schematic diagram that appears on these pages.

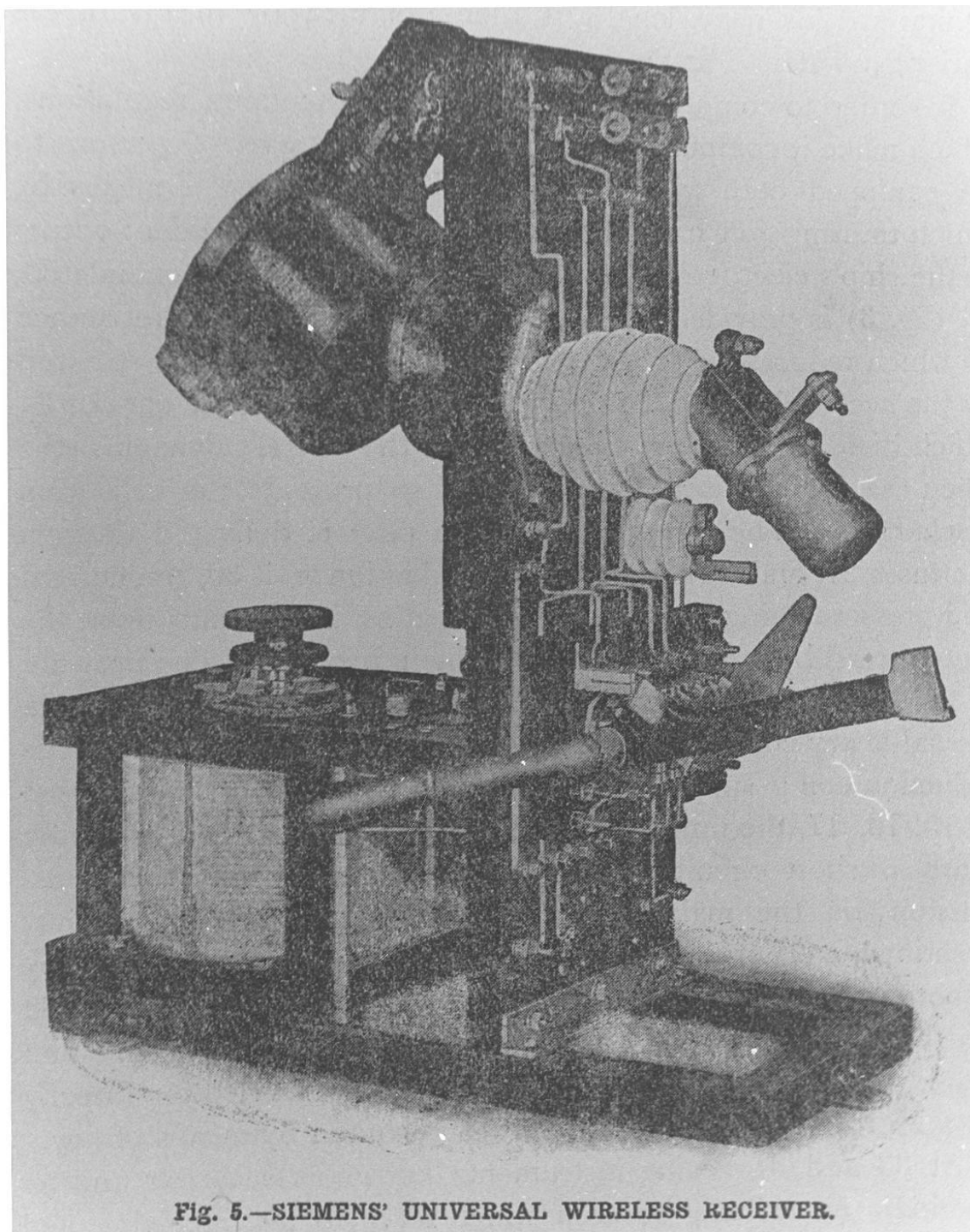


Fig. 5.—SIEMENS' UNIVERSAL WIRELESS RECEIVER.

John Rae VE1AGN from Brown's Signal Book 1917

The Receiver is the unit marked number 23 and a larger photograph of this unit is above. This receiver was directly connected to the antenna and to ground. It consisted of a primary inductance and a variable condenser for tuning purposes in the antenna. This primary inductance induced upon a secondary inductance was connected to either of two detectors. Signals were reproduced in an ordinary headphone of the time, two of which could be used with the receiver, in order that two operators could listen at the same time to the signals received.

This receiver had a switch at the back, which became known as the transmit/receive switch, so that damage to the equipment or the operator did not occur by the accidental keying of the transmitter. It also was used to protect the receiver while transmitting. In other words we have two international Q signals which relate to this switch, the two being QSK, meaning "I can hear you between my signals", and QSG, meaning "I will transmit the number (transmitted right after – i.e. QSG5 meaning 5) of telegrams at a time". The last stations used an electronic means of switching the receiver on and off while transmitting and were capable of hearing between their radiotelegraph characters in code. These signals were rarely used with that equipment. The older ships would send the international Q signal QTC, meaning he had a telegram to send. Many often sent (for example) QTC25, meaning he had 25 telegrams to send, and he would follow this with (for example) QSG5. Meaning he would send five of these telegrams at a time and then switch from transmit to receive to make certain the receiving operator was still able to copy.

This Siemens Universal Wireless Receiver had a frequency range of from 200 to 2000 meters (150 to 1500 kHz). The wave change switch was located on the back plate. By means of a plug lead and plug socket any desired inductance was put into the antenna circuit. By means of a second plug a tapping was taken off the secondary coil for the required frequency. An exact tuning to this frequency was then obtained by means of the variable condenser at the base.

The batteries marked number 26 in the photograph are the emergency batteries capable of operating the station should the ship's main generators have failed. These batteries were kept charged from the ship's main generators by the unit marked number 25. Since the ship's main generators supplied direct current, this unit was nothing more than a resistance to drop this voltage to the required level. The unit marked number 24 was an automatic cut-out, which would break the emergency battery circuit had the main ship's voltage failed, especially when the operator was not present. This prevented these emergency batteries from discharging.

Switch marked number 31 switched the station from either the ship's main generators or these emergency batteries. When the emergency batteries were used as the station's operating voltage, the circuit was as follows: the batteries marked number 26 through the fuses marked number 27, through the switch marked number 28, to the induction coil marked number 30. The voltage and current were controlled by indicating instruments on the switchboard by means of a small switch beneath this switchboard. The voltage to the induction coil was regulated by the resistance marked number 29 and had a special heavy current hammer break. The high voltage from the inductance coil was supplied to the main excitation circuit composed of units marked numbers 15, 16, and 17, the number of spark gaps being reduced to two by means of short circuiting plugs.

The actual transmission from this station took place by either of the two telegraph keys marked number 32. Either of these keys could be placed in the low voltage circuit of either the main ship's voltage or that of the emergency batteries.

The unit's marked numbers 33 and 34 were test instruments known as a buzzer and an aperiodic circuit and were used for testing either the transmitting or receiving circuits.

At this date and time these wireless stations were sold with a guarantee of their range in miles. This particular Siemens Brothers Co. Ltd. Station came with a guarantee of 250 miles by day, 375 miles by night, providing the masts holding the antenna were 115 feet high. Naturally this detail also mentioned the fact that such installations had frequently communicated for distances of 1500 miles.

It is a pity I was unable to locate a better photograph of the Camperdown station around this time. A description of this station similar to that which I have tried to describe here of a ship which was communicating with Camperdown, would be most interesting. But the basic operation of the station would have been much the same. The main difference would have been that a gasoline generator would have replaced the main ship's generators as described here.

In 1921 the equipment at Camperdown VCS consisted of a 2 kilowatt, nonasynchronous disc, 60-cycle Marconi coast station spark transmitter. This received its power from a generator driven by a 6 HP Fairbanks Morse 2-type engine. Also a ¼ kilowatt asynchronous disc 500-cycle Marconi cabinet type spark set, powered by a battery which was kept charged from a 1-1/2 HP engine and generator. The main receiver was a Marconi crystal type 2846A. A magnetic detector (ancestor of the wire recorder) formed part of an auxiliary receiver. The aerial was a four-wire umbrella suspended from a 180-foot mast.



George Raine

This is George Raine operating Camperdown Radio VCS in 1923.



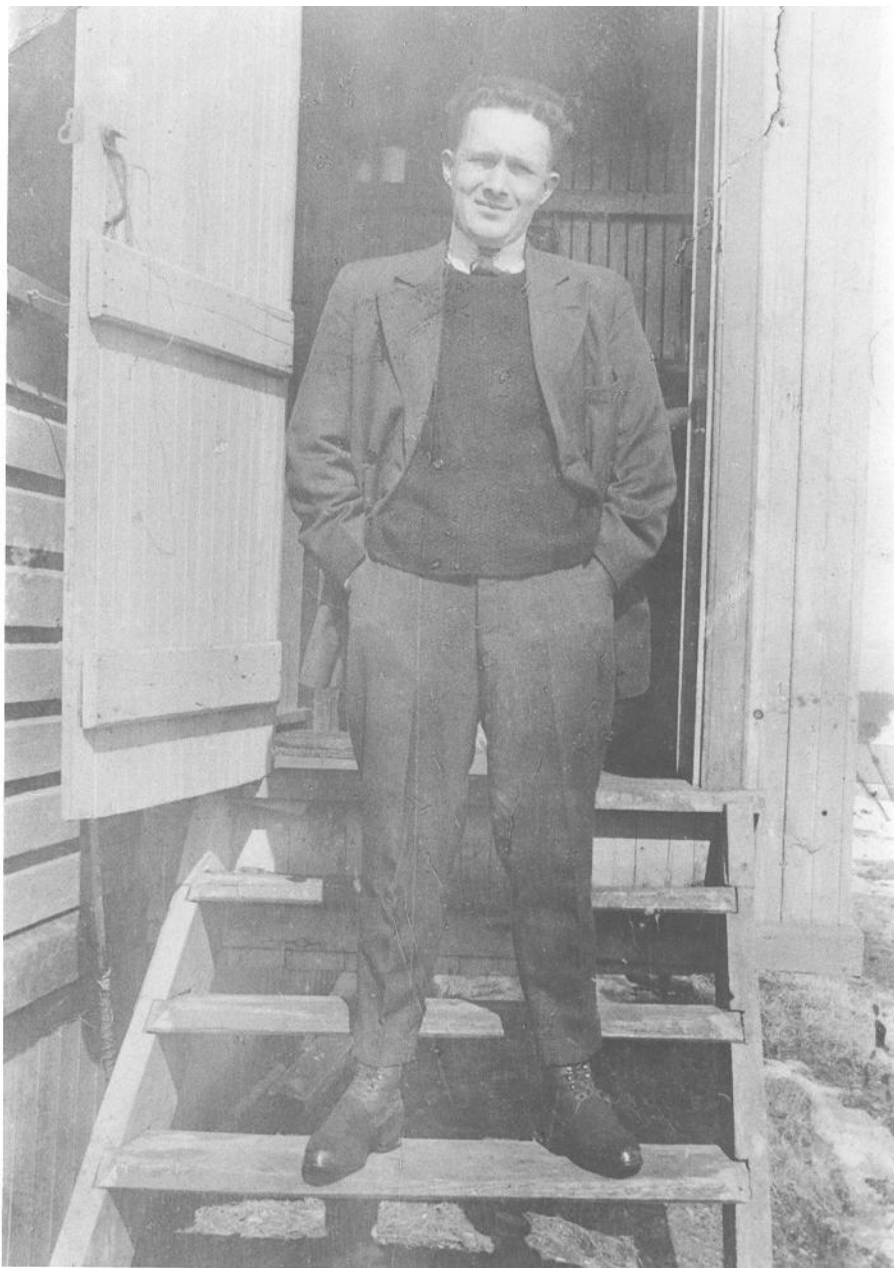
A. K. Smith VE1BY

This is G.E. "Champ" Champion on the left and J. W. Percy operators at Camperdown Radio VCS 1923.



G. E. Champion

This is George Raine operator at Camperdown VCS 1923 on the station steps.



G. E. Champion

This is "Champ" Champion in the door of Camperdown Radio VCS 1923.



G. E. Champion

This is Marconi House Camperdown Radio VCS 1922 and this was the Officer in Charge's home.



G. E. Champion

This is the Marconi Wireless Station VCS Camperdown with the officer in charge house in the background 1922.



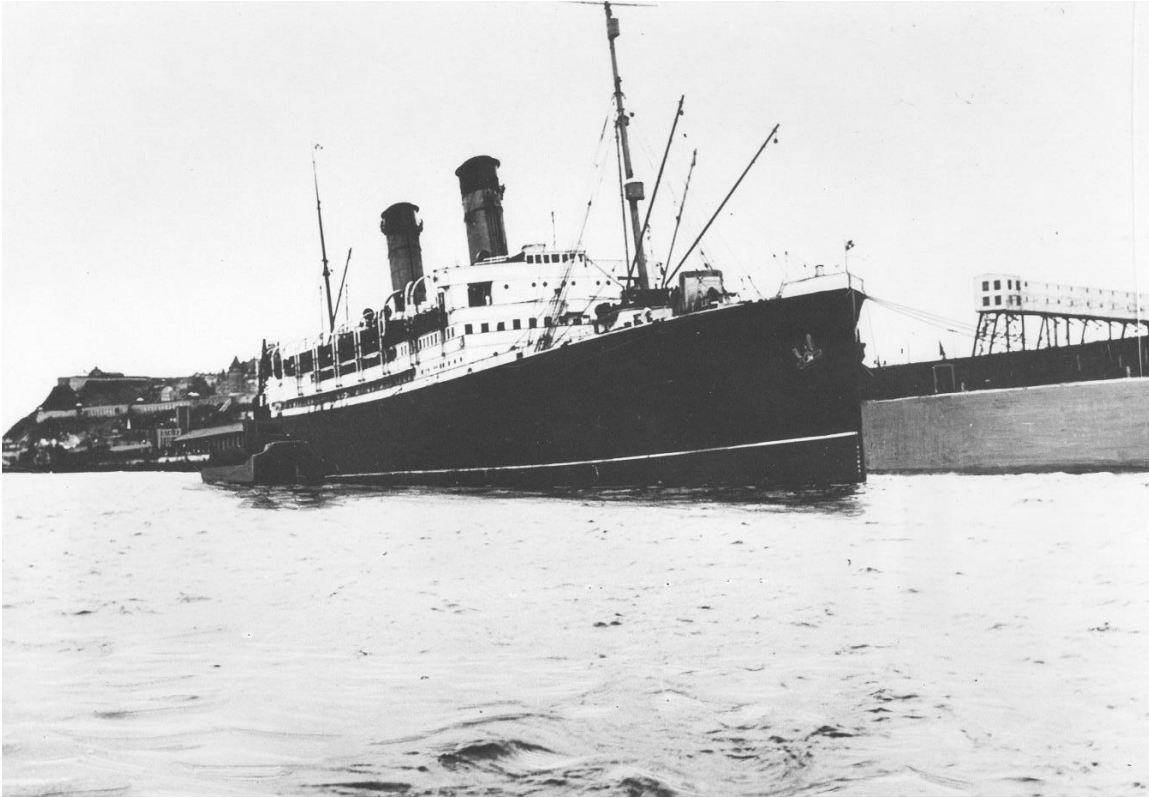
G. E. Champion

This is the Camperdown Station Staff in 1922 and they are from left to right, Officer in Charge Inder, Sampson, Champion and Clare.



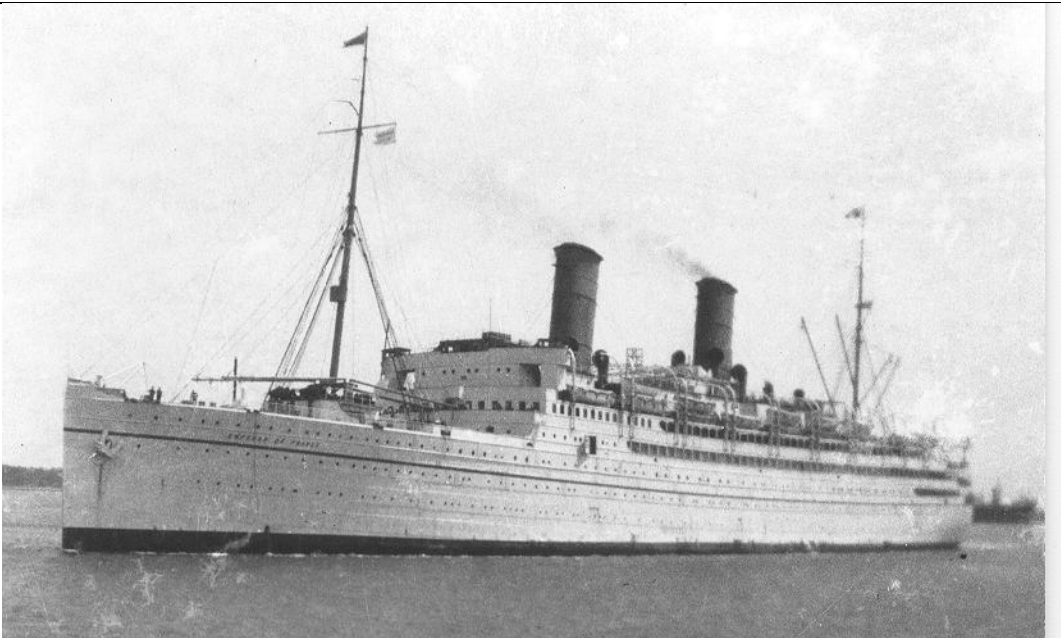
G. E. Champion

This is wireless operator Thomas H. Raddall Camperdown Radio 1922. Like so many, Tom became so fed-up with the Canadian Marconi Company he quit operating shortly after this photograph was taken and then became one of Canada's best writers.



Public Archives Canada PA-48239

This is the EMPRESS OF FRANCE about 1923 and at the time the largest vessel in the Canadian Pacific fleet.



World Ship Society

This is the EMPRESS OF FRANCE in 1913.



Canadian Pacific 10354

This is the Wireless Room in the EMPRESS OF FRANCE in 1923.



Canadian Pacific 10452

This is the Wireless Room in the EMPRESS OF FRANCE in 1923.

THE ALEXANDERSON ALTERNATOR

Dr. Alexanderson, a Swedish immigrant to the United States, perfected his Alternator Transmitters during World War I while an Engineer-Inventor with the General Electric Corporation. These transmitters worked on the same principal as any alternator today, including the ones found in modern automobiles, except these were very large (47 feet by 11 feet) and weighed many tons (about 50). They were capable of very high speeds placing the outputs of same up in the radio frequency spectrum of between ten and thirty kilohertz. When you consider the size and the constant high speed of rotation involved with these units, Dr. Alexanderson begins to appear more the genius he actually was, rather than just an inventor or engineer. But these large alternators were the first of our continuous wave transmitters. It was one of these first alternator transmitters that made the first radiotelephone broadcast that took place as early as Christmas Eve 1906. Dr. Alexanderson perfected these transmitters during the war so that they were capable of a power output of 200 kilowatts. These 200-kilowatt units became and remained the most popular. Because of the low frequency used by these transmitters, their signals were very reliable and were heard half way round the world. Many provided continuous and reliable communications until the late 1940's.

These transmitters were involved in much of the history of the world and many have fond memories of one experience or another gained from them. One example is that one of these units installed at New Brunswick, New Jersey, and operating with call sign NFF, as part of the United States communications system during World War I, contacted station POZ, the largest German station, on October 20, 1918 and demanded the abduction of the Kaiser as a preliminary to Armistice negotiations. This contact was the first contact the United States had with the German station since the war had broken out and afterwards the station was used exclusively for the Armistice negotiations. This was so that all the countries, including the

allies of Germany, could easily hear and obtain the true story of the negotiations. All transmissions were made in English and no coded messages were allowed.

When Mr. Marconi learned of these transmitters, he naturally became very impressed and not only tried to obtain exclusive world wide distribution rights, but placed an order amounting to several million dollars worth for a number of them to be constructed by the General Electric Corporation. This brought about an interesting development. The United States Communications during World War I was under the command of Admiral Bullard. It was he, who not only fully realized the tremendous commercial potential wireless contained, but felt it time that the United States owned and operated their own system, rather than rely on the Marconi Wireless Company of America that was owned by the British Marconi Company (identical to the Canadian Marconi Company).

Admiral Bullard arranged a meeting with the top officials of the General Electric Corporation and made his views known. From this meeting the sale of the Alexanderson Alternators to Marconi was cancelled and the General Electric Corporation purchased the stock of the American Marconi Company. The Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was formed in October 1919 and in November this new corporation took over all the stock of the American Marconi Company from the General Electric Corporation. This was the beginning of what has become one of the finest and largest electronic organizations in the world.

THE CLOSING OF CAMPERDOWN VCS

Amateur Radio has been (and still is) responsible for the greatest development in radio. Amateur radio operators have developed many unknown areas into something worthwhile. These developments have been taken over for commercial use. Amateur radio must be the most fantastic hobby known to man. There is something within it for everyone and it knows no political or international boundaries.

About this time Amateur Radio had discovered that the bottom portion of the high frequency band was of some use for communications. Prior to this all frequencies above our present AM Broadcast Band were considered useless. Progress along these lines clearly indicated that all it would take is a better vacuum tube. Communications on the high frequencies producing continuous waves of very long range with fairly low power were not only possible they were practical. Ships were now able to contact their home countries or any station in countries involving long distances direct. This created possibly one of the most significant changes to take place in marine communications. One coast station would now be capable of handling all the message traffic of many of the older stations. The Marconi organization started to cut back on the number of coast stations operated by them and Camperdown VCS was one of these stations.

The Marconi Company closed the station on April 4th, 1926, and the VCS call sign became redundant, but this did not mean that Halifax had no station to communicate with ships. When Marconi pulled out, the Canadian Government up graded the Chebucto Head D/F station VAV to a combined direction-finding coast station. VAV was already operating on 800 meters (375-kHz) and 600 meters (500-kHz), and it was a simple matter to convert this station for operation on another frequency for communication (the handling of messages between ships and shore). It was also a simple matter to transfer the telephone and the telegraph (the CD landline call was retained) to Chebucto Head VAV. "Sprack" Spracklin joined this station as Officer in Charge at this time.

At about this same time, because of cut backs in our military expenditures, many of our government officials wanted to terminate such an organization completely, the Army decided to close the old Camperdown Signal Station. These Army signalmen at this time were a few members of the Royal Canadian Regiment. A small signal station was opened at Chebucto Head to replace the famous old station. Two civilian signalmen, Dan Martin and John E. Spears, were hired to man this station around the clock. These two were joined by a third signalman, John Wilkie, shortly afterwards, and this new station provided a full range of visual communications, the International Code of Signals (flags) during the hours of daylight and signal lamp during the hours of darkness or daylight. The signal lamp operated from a voltage taken off the batteries at the wireless station.



C. R. Spracklin

This is the Chebucto DF Wireless Station VAV Radio Staff House front and Lighthouse taken from the wireless mast in 1928. The dark line down the photograph is one of the guy wires to the mast.



A. K. Smith VE1BY

These photographs were taken on the occasion of Jack Brooman and Agnes Gallagher wedding at Ketch Harbour in 1929.

In the front row left to right are Jack Doherty, Johnnie Wilkie (Signalman) and Bert Turner.

In the back row left to right are Al Smith, C. E. Rose and Johnnie Spears (Signalman).



A. K. Smith VE1BY

This is left to right: Mrs. Gallagher, A. K. "Al" Smith, Fern Evans and Eddie Gallagher (Lightkeeper) 1929.



A. K. Smith VE1BY

This is left to right: Mrs. Gallagher, Marge Martin who became Mrs. Charlie Williams, Fern Evans and Eddie Gallagher at Chebucto Head 1929.

HALIFAX RADIO VAA

VAA Halifax has proved to be somewhat of a mystery, but as near as I can determine it was a very small station located in a small shed at HMC Dockyard. This would have been a naval station, possibly the first such Canadian station, and would have been used mainly to communicate with naval vessels or all ships within the harbour area. I remember either Mr. Reay Bridger or Mr. C. R. "Sprack" Spracklin telling me that this station used to transmit a weather broadcast. The operators were probably members of the RNCVR but neither Reay nor Sprack knew them.

THE CANADIAN COAST STATIONS

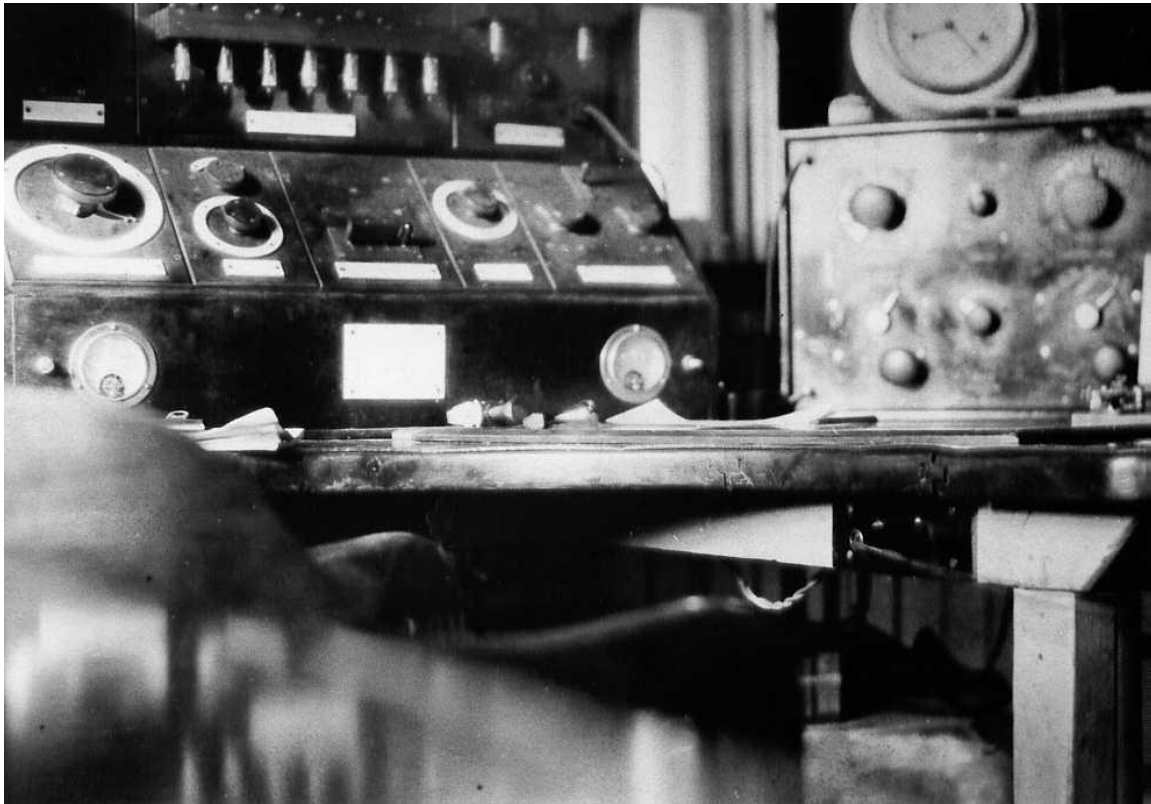
This is a list of the Canadian Coast Stations that was composed by Mr. Alf Lawton. Mr. Lawton was one of the first wireless operators around Eastern Canada and was one of at least six that tried to record this history and failed. At least failed to have it published in a book, but as long as we can keep copies of this history in circulation it may become better known.

The station call signs were two letters when first opened. On January 1st, 1908 the two letter call signs became three letters with the addition of the prefix M. After the London Radio Convention of 1912 the stations were given new call signs. In Canada these stations had the prefix V. It took several years for these stations to use these new call signs with the V prefix.

The stations according to Mr. Lawton were:

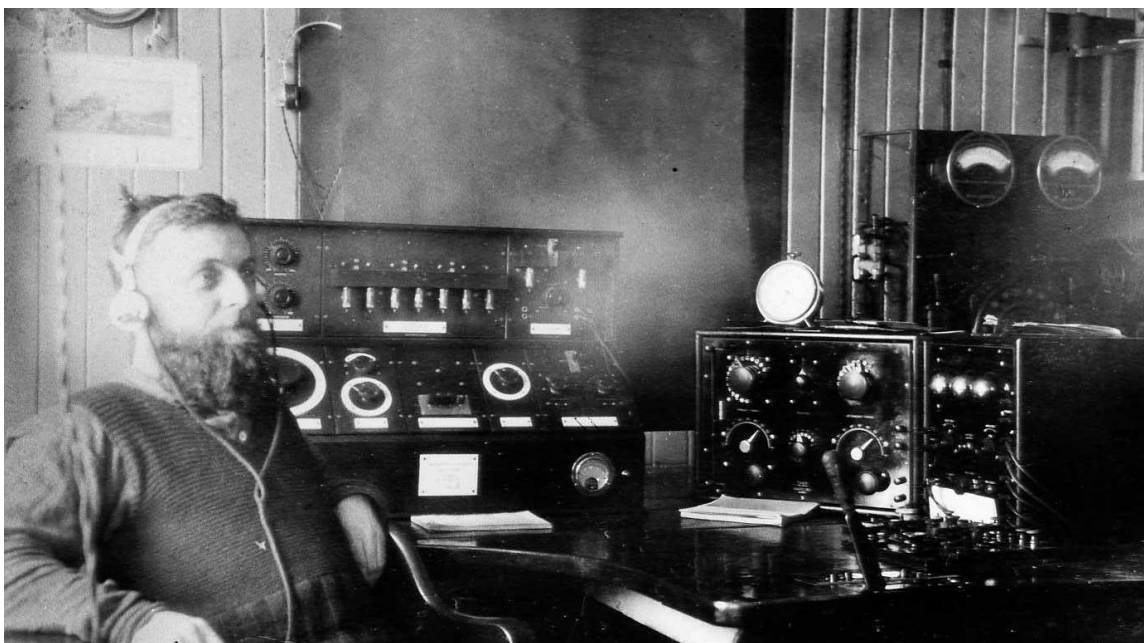
Year Built	Location	Date Opened	Call Sign (s)

1901	Belle Isle, Newfoundland	October 10 th	BI		
	(This station appears to have been moved to a new site in 1904)				
1901	Chateau Bay, Labrador	October 20 th	CB	MCB	
1902	Glace Bay, Nova Scotia	December 15 th	GB		
1904	Fame Point, Quebec	June 25 th	FP	MFP	VCG
1904	Heath Point, Quebec	July 21 st	HP	MHP	VCI
1904	Point Armour, Labrador	August 10 th	PR	MPR	VCL
1904	Belle Isle, Newfoundland (New)	September 1 st	BI	MBI	VCM



A. K. Smith

This is Belle Isle Radio VCM in 1928 and on the left is the D/F Receiver and then the Long Wave Receiver with the clock sitting on it. There were peanut tubes in the D/F and the Marconi Receiver was an MST – MSA 3 with 201A tubes.



Reay Bridger

This is Alexander McLean operating Belle Isle Radio VCM during the winter of 1925.

1904	Cape Ray, Newfoundland	October 7 th	CR	MCR	VCR
1904	Cape Race, Newfoundland	November 17 th	CE	MCE	VCE

These three stations above were built by the Newfoundland government on the Labrador:

1904	Battle Harbour, Labrador		BH	MBH	VOA
1904	Venison Island, Labrador		VI	MVI	VOB
1904	Domino, Labrador		DO	MDO	VOD

1905	Camperdown, Nova Scotia	June 14 th	HX	MHX	VCS
1905	Sable Island, Nova Scotia	June 24 th	SD	MSD	VCT
1905	Cape Sable, Nova Scotia	July 3 rd	SB	MSB	VCU
1905	Whittle Rocks, Quebec (Harrington)	July	WR	MWR	VCJ
1905	Point Riche, Newfoundland	August	CH	MCH	VCH
1905	Partridge Island, N.B. (Saint John)	August	SJ	MSJ	VCV
1905	Cape Bear, Prince Edward Island	November 25 th	BE	MBE	VCP
1905	Grosse Isle, Quebec	December 20 th	GI	MGI	VCD
1906	Pictou, Nova Scotia	January	UB	MUB	VCQ
1906	Quebec City, Quebec	March 5 th	QU	MQU	VCC
1906	Clarke City, Quebec (Sept Iles)	October 20 th	CK	MCK	VCK
1906	Father Point, Quebec	December 22 nd	RT	MRT	VCF

These two stations were built by the Newfoundland Government on the Labrador

1906	American Tickle, Labrador		AT	MAT	VOC
1906	Indian Harbour, Labrador		NR	MNR	

1907	Point Grey, British Columbia	April 10 th	PGD		VAB
1907	North Sydney, Nova Scotia	May 15 th	ND	MND	VCO
1907	Gonzales Hill, B.C. (Victoria)	October 22 nd	VSD		VAK
1907	Pachena Point, British Columbia	November 25 th	KPD		VAD
1908	Estevan Point, British Columbia	January 13 th	USD		VAE
1908	Cape Lazo, British Columbia	February 1 st	SKD		VAC
1909	Three Rivers, Quebec	October		MRS	VCB

1909	Montreal, Quebec	November		MTL	VCA
1909	Ikeda Head, British Columbia	November	DKD		VAI
1910	Triangle Island, British Columbia	March	TLD		VAG
1910	Digby Island, B.C. (Prince Rupert)	June	PRD		VAJ
1910	Port Arthur, Ontario	October 31 st	PR	MPR	VBA
1910	Grindstone Island, Quebec	December 4 th		MUD	VCN
1911	Dead Tree Point, British Columbia	February	CAD		VAH
1912	Fogo, Newfoundland	Last week in March			VOJ
(The entry on Fogo is from an article in Downhomer magazine and states the station was erected and owned by Canadian Marconi Company and was closed in 1933)					
1912	Midland, Ontario	July 5 th	CKD		VBC
1912	Tobermory, Ontario	July 24 th	CJD		VBD
1912	Sault Ste Marie	August 7 th	CID		VBB
1913	Alert Bay, British Columbia	January 16 th	CFD		VAF
1913	Point Edward, Ontario	April 16 th			VBE
1913	The Pas, Manitoba	August			VBM
1913	Port Nelson, Manitoba	October			VBN
1914	Kingston, Ontario	January 19 th			VBH
1914	Toronto, Ontario	January 24 th			VBG
1914	Port Burell, Ontario	January 30 th			VPF
1914	Newcastle, New Brunswick				VAN
1914	Louisburg, Nova Scotia				VAS
1915	Barrington Passage, Nova Scotia	April 10 th	TS		VAL
1918	Chebucto Head, Nova Scotia DF	March 15 th			VAV



Warren E. Hagar

This is the VAV Chebucto Head DF Station in 1927.

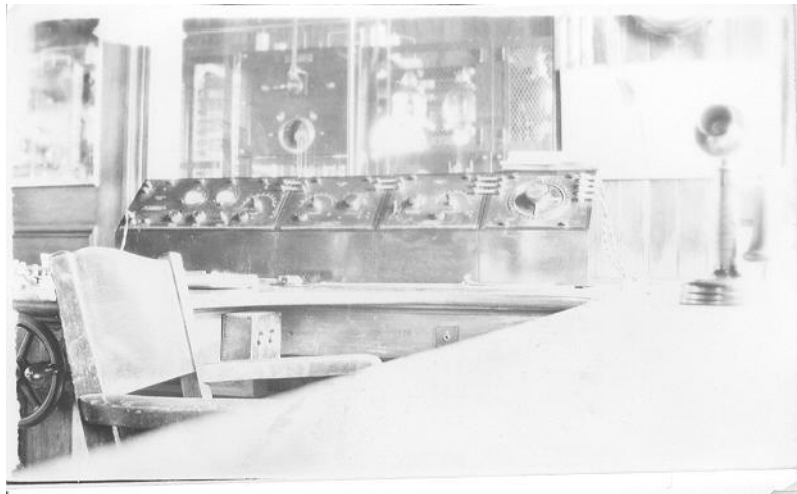
1918	Cape Sable, Nova Scotia DF	April 29 th			VAW
1918	Canso, Nova Scotia DF	June 20 th			VAX



Warren E. Hagar

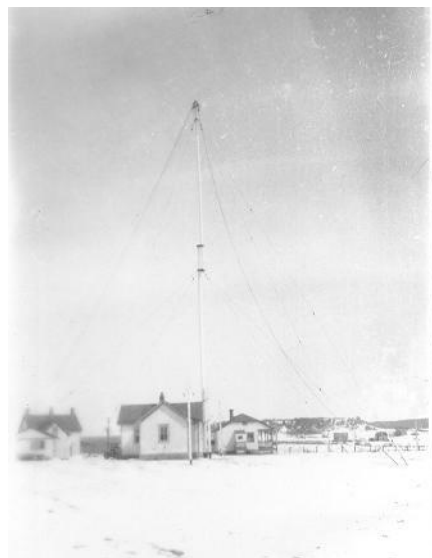
VAX Canso DF 1928

1918	Bird Rocks, Quebec	August 26 th	VBR
1918	Cape Race, Newfoundland DF	November 23 rd	VAZ
1919	Red Head, (Saint John) N.B. DF	February 5 th	VAR



Warren E. Hagar

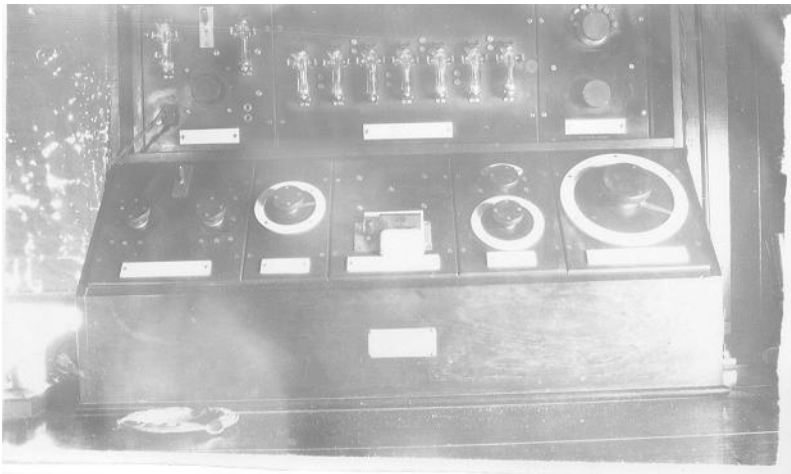
This is the DF position at VAR Saint John located at Red Head, New Brunswick in 1932.



Warren E. Hagar

This is VAR Saint John located at Red Head, New Brunswick in 1929.

1919	Bull Harbour, British Columbia	June 23 rd	VAG
1923	St. Paul's Island, Nova Scotia DF	September 15 th	VAT
1923	Mayo Landing, Yukon Territory	October	VEB
1923	Dawson City, Yukon Territory	October	VEC
1924	Yarmouth, Nova Scotia	January 7 th	VAU



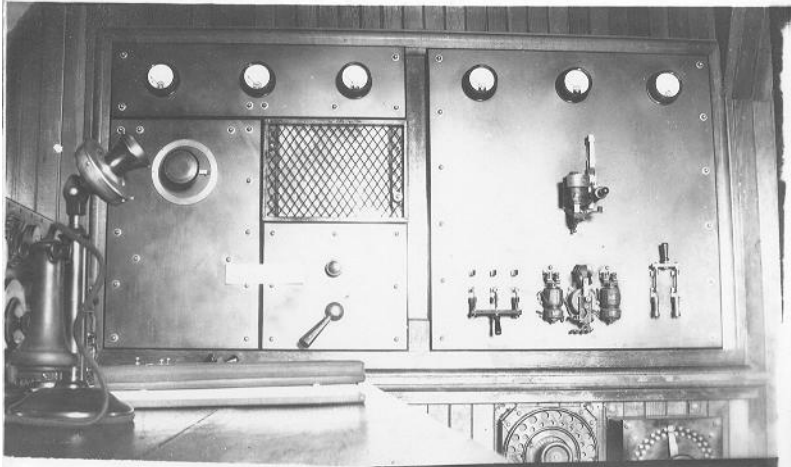
Warren E. Hagar

This is a 12A Marconi DF Yarmouth VAU at Rockville, Nova Scotia 1925.



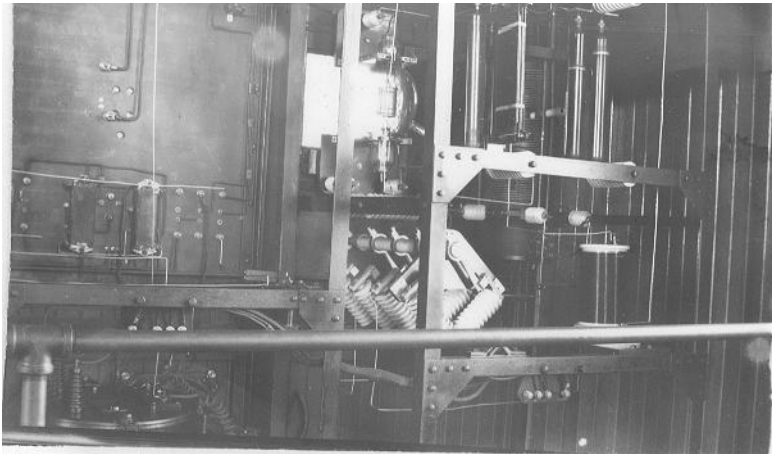
Warren E. Hagar

This is Yarmouth DF VAU located at Rockville, Nova Scotia 1926.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the one tube transmitter at VAU Yarmouth D/F 1926.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the transmitter at VAU Yarmouth D/F 1925.

1924	Edmonton, Alberta	October	VED
1924	Fort Simpson, N.W.T.	October	VEC
1925	Fort Smith, N.W.T.	August	VEG
1925	Aklavik, N.W.T.	August	VEF
1927	Nottingham Island, Hudson Bay	August 20 th	VCB
1927	Wakeham Bay, Hudson Bay	September 22 nd	VCJ
1927	Port Burwell, Labrador	October 24 th	---
1928	Cape Harrison, Hudson Bay		VAL
1928	Cape Hopes Advance, Hudson Bay	September 25 th	VAY
1928	Fort Churchill, Manitoba		VAP
1928	Chesterfield Inlet, Hudson Bay		VBZ
1929	Resolution Island, Hudson Bay	October 4 th	VAW
1930	Coppermine, N.W.T.	September 1 st	VBK
1932	LuLu Island, (New Westminster) B.C.	March 21 st	---

One can see it took a few years for the call signs to become standardized from the 1912 London Radio Convention. I have no idea where the call signs with the C prefix came from around 1912. Canada did not receive the C block of call signs until the 1920's. It is rather strange that Barrington received and used the two letter TS call sign as late as 1915.

Mr. Lawton did not record Halifax, VAA, but it must have opened sometime during World War I and closed shortly after the war. The VAA call sign then went to Ottawa.

Great Whale River, Hudson Bay, is not on the list because it did not open until after 1936. Great Whale had Chebucto Head's call sign, VAV.

Frobisher Bay, North West Territories is not here. Frobisher had call sign VFF and that is an indication it started as an aeradio station and probably during or after World War II. There were more stations that are not recorded here because they opened after 1932 or were missed for some other unknown reason.

Yes, there are duplicates in this list but if one checks the dates closely they will realize that the previous holder of any duplicate had closed and the call sign was reassigned. The only exception is that Mr. Lawton has a duplicate with the VEC call sign, but Dawson City was VEA, and Fort Simpson was VEC.

The VE calls were stations owned and operated by members of the Royal Canadian Signal Corps of the Canadian Army. I worked with two former members of this organization, Barny MacNeil and Dick Bullock. Both were sent to these stations during World War II. Barny came from Montreal and Dick from Toronto and both married native Indian girls and made their home at Inuvik, and only went outside, as we called it, about once in all the years they lived up north. When I left Inuvik Barny was the airport manager and Dick was the senior operator at the combined marine aeradio station, with call signs VFA and VFA6. When the Army terminated these stations, in the 1950's, the service was taken over by the Department of Transport and both Barny and Dick transferred over to the Department of Transport. These Army stations were called the North West Territories and Yukon System abbreviated to NWT&Y and there is an interesting history of these stations that one can find via Google.

Dick and Barny could tell some interesting stories about their years spent in the north. The one that I found most interesting was one Dick told. He said that one of the Army linemen stationed at Fort Simpson strung up a long wire antenna over two miles long. This worked so well they listened to Edmonton broadcast stations during the day.

Dick was a devote member of the Roman Catholic Church. So much so that he had sufficient kids to form a couple of hockey teams, a couple of curling teams, and a cribbage tournament or two, on the ice at the same time. One evening I gave Dick a lift home from work at the station that was eight miles from the village, and on the way we stopped off at the hospital and picked up my wife Joan. The first thing Joan said when she climbed in the vehicle was "you'll never guess what happened to me tonight". When you realize some of the experiences she had at that hospital it was a waste of time to guess. She carried on and stated a woman wanted a bedpan and when she gave it to her she had a baby in it. Thank God Dick spoke up with "yeah, it was my wife" before we got carried away with this news. One of the priests stationed at Inuvik, shortly after I left was into cross-country skiing. He coached some of Dick's kids to the point they made the Olympic Games and their achievements were described in various magazines at the time. I am sure all of Inuvik and Canada were very proud of their accomplishments.

These Army stations replaced the landline telegraph that was strung up through Northern British Columbia, the Yukon Territory and on to Alaska. It had connections into Alaska because they tried to set up a time signal from Washington, D.C., to Alaska on this line a few times. Whitehorse, VEY is not on Mr. Lawton's list and must have opened after 1932 or even later. Fort Smith, VEG was the capital of the North West Territories until 1967. Dawson City was the capital of the Yukon until it was transferred to Whitehorse in 1951. This government owned and operated Yukon Telegraph kept their lines in good repair after it was turned over to radio because they were not sure how well the radio would work. They did not fully understand the skip feature associated with radio.

One of my favourite books is "40 Years on the Yukon Telegraph" by Guy Lawrence. Mr. Lawrence joined this telegraph line in 1902 and retired in 1946. With the exception of a few years in the Army overseas during World War I, he spent all this time on these telegraph lines. He had a most interesting experience. This book was reprinted in 1990.

The Yukon Telegraph main telegraph line was from Ashcroft, British Columbia, straight north to Dawson City, Yukon Territory. There was a branch off this main line into Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and a branch off this branch line into Stewart, British Columbia.

In 1936 a large portion of the Yukon Telegraph line switched from landline telegraph to continuous wave radiotelegraph, and switched from the landline telegraph code to the continental radio code. The longest portion of this telegraph line to switch from landline to radio in 1936 was the section from Hazelton to Telegraph Creek in northern British Columbia. According to Mr. Lawton's list at least a section of this telegraph line in the Yukon must have switched to Army Signal Corps around 1923 or shortly after.

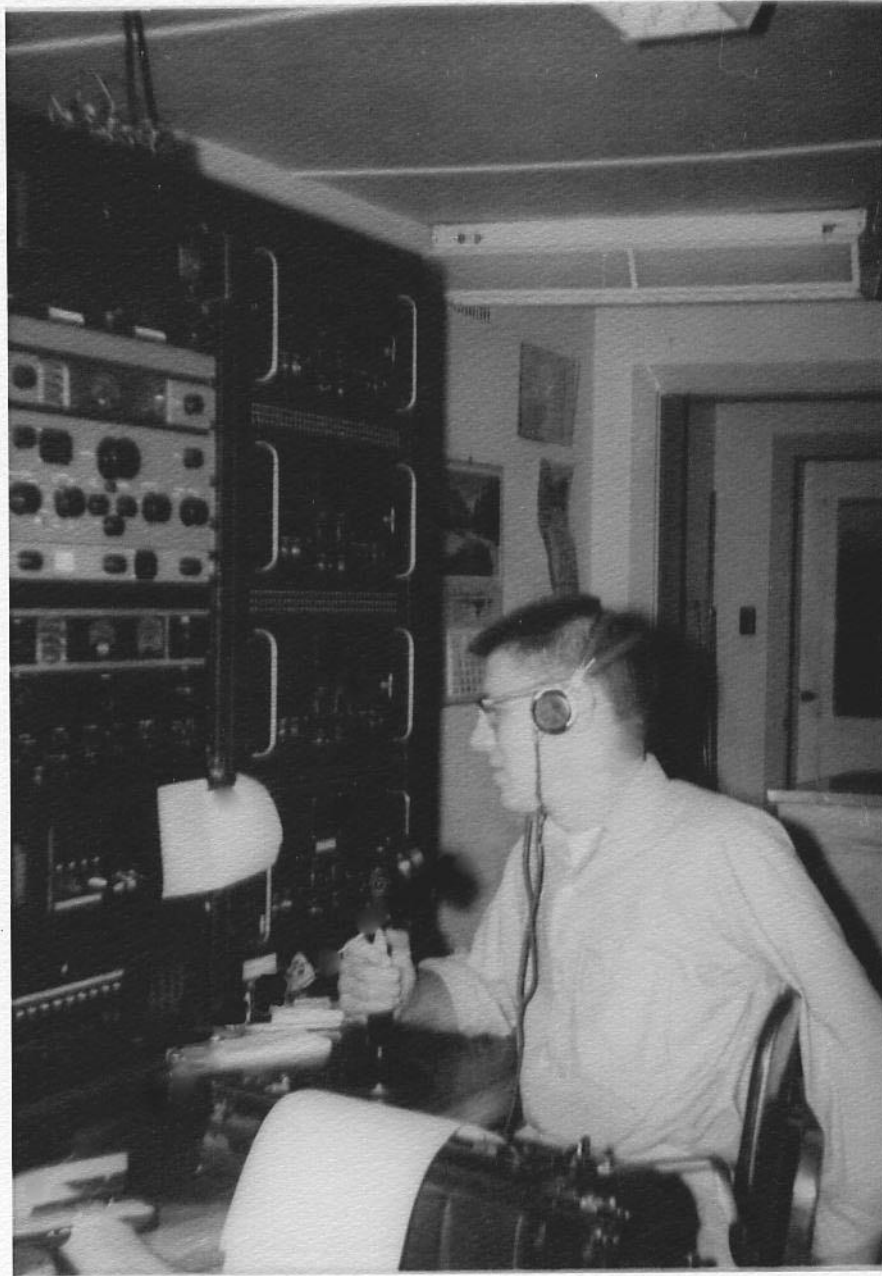
Call Signs of the Royal Canadian Signal Corps Northern Stations of the Royal Canadian Army:

I found the following call signs on the website of the Northwest Territories and Yukon System abbreviated NWT & Y System.

VEA	Dawson, Yukon Territory
VEB	Mayo, Yukon Territory
VEC	Fort Simpson, North West Territories
VED	Edmonton, Alberta
VEE	Snare River, North West Territories
VEF	Aklavik, North West Territories
VEG	Fort Smith, North West Territories
VEH	Fort Resolution, North West Territories
VEI	Fort Good Hope, North West Territories
VEJ	unknown
VEK	Baker Lake, and also Tuktoyaktuk, North West Territories
VEL	unknown
VEM	Yellowknife, North West Territories
VEN	Wrigley, and also Cameron Bay, North West Territories
VEO	Hay River, North West Territories
VEP	Embarras, Alberta
VEQ	Port Radium, North West Territories
VER	Ottawa, Ontario
VES	Fort McMurray, Alberta
VET	Fort Chipewyan, Alberta
VEU	Fort Reliance, North West Territories
VEV	Norman Wells, North West Territories
VEW	Fort Providence, North West Territories
VEX	Fort Norman, North West Territories
VEY	Whitehorse, Yukon Territory
VEZ	Brochet, Manitoba

Some of the Army stations around Canada were assigned a three letter call sign with a VD prefix. VDH was Alert, North West Territories, VDD was Debert, Nova Scotia and VDI was Beaverlodge Lake, Saskatchewan to name three.

These Northern Army Stations were turned over to the Department of Transport. The telephones in the Yukon were Canadian National when I lived at Teslin, Yukon Territory, in the early 1960's. These telephones operated via some lines strung along the Alaska Highway and via microwave, not by radio. I spoke to my father in Nova Scotia over this phone system and had a very good connection. We had an open line on speaker at the aeradio station that included all the aeradio stations from Northway, Alaska, at the Alaska – Yukon border, down to and including Air Traffic Control at Edmonton, Alberta. This was known as Sked F and a means of keeping one and all in contact with the aircraft flying along that route. This worked very well and I remember very little outage because of line or equipment failure.



Joan Roscoe

This is S. G. "Spud" Roscoe operating Teslin Aeradio with call sign VFT2 in 1963. Sked F was mounted under the table left of the typewriter with the handset hanging just left of the typewriter. This old photograph had a bad scratch down it but thanks to Sue Maskill, Peterborough, England she managed to remove it. Note the two RCA AR88 receivers in the centre or left rack. There are three fixed VHF receivers in the right rack. They were manufactured by either the Marconi or Collins Companies. We had both at this station and they were identical. The VHF transmitters are mounted in the left rack out of the photograph along with the two UHF transmitters and receivers.

November 3, 2007

This is the Sixth Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

DISTRESS COMMUNICATIONS

The first known shipwreck in the Halifax area that involved a system of marine communications occurred in November 1797 when the frigate TRIBUNE was wrecked in the harbour entrance. This occurred off York Redoubt and news of this along with a request for help from the Dockyard, was communicated by the signal staff at the redoubt. This is the first indication we have of the date the Duke of Kent erected this famous signal station. Since that time all marine distress incidents around this coast have involved these communications stations in one way or another, but it is no longer possible to record all the incidents that have been assisted.

This distress aspect of this type of communication has been such an important part of the operation of these stations, that it is impossible to record anything of the history of marine communications without describing a few. A list of known shipwrecks will only provide fuel for the imagination. It will give the date and with this slight bit of knowledge, you can only assume what took place at the nearest stations.

When the number of ships involved is realized, you have to admit that a request for assistance in one form or another is rare, but they do happen and will continue to take place as long as human beings are out in ships. Ships are better constructed today and the crews are fewer in number and better educated. Ships no longer have the steering or propeller problems they had a few decades ago. At that, the operators were handling at least three requests per week of direct assistance in one form or another when the station closed in 1996. A sick crewmember, physical injury, or an engine problem seemed to be the majority of the trouble. This is all handled via satellite, if the incident occurred any distance from the coast, since the station closed.

There had been hundreds of shipwrecks around this coast by the time the first wireless stations were erected. Many involved small sailing vessels and naturally some of these were assisted in one form or another after these stations went into service, but the poor quality of logging fails to mention any. Any participation must have appeared in the messages handled, which were only logged by number. There is no record of the actual messages.

ABERDEEN VDG

The next distress, I will record, was one of our own Coast Guard Ships. At least she would have been a Canadian Coast Guard Ship (CCGS) in today's terminology. Then she was known simply as a Canadian Government Ship or a Dominion Government Steamer. On Saturday, October 13th, 1923, the ABERDEEN departed Yarmouth in thick fog, bound for an inspection tour with J. C. Chesley, Marine Agent, Saint John, P. F. Morrison, Engineer, Saint John, and John Kelley, Superintendent of Lighthouses, on board.

The ABERDEEN had been built at Paisley, Scotland, in 1894. She was 180 feet long, 674 gross tons, and carried a crew of forty-five men. She was under the command of Captain Loran B. Kinney, and Fred Hill was her wireless operator.

At about one PM the ABERDEEN was approaching Black Ledge about one mile and a quarter from Seal Island. As her speed was being reduced in order to take soundings of the water depth, her lookout spotted something ahead. ABERDEEN's engines were reversed immediately to full speed astern but she struck the wreck of the trawler SNIPE, which had been lost in June of 1922. This collision ripped a hole about twenty-five feet long from the forward hatch to the after part of the vessel. She filled immediately and settled on the ledge at 1:15 PM.

Al Smith was on duty at Cape Sable VCU at the time Fred sent his SOS from VDG (ABERDEEN). Al notified the proper authorities and a sister ship, the LAURENTIAN (call sign CGC) departed Saint John immediately to assist along with the ACADIA (call sign VDT) which was at Halifax, and the ARLEUX (call sign CFL) which was at Briar Island.

ABERDEEN had been using call code "AB" prior to 1912. This was not MAB as one would assume but ABD according to a 1912 list of these calls as provided by Laval Desbiens. The "D" suffix may have meant Dominion as in Dominion Government Steamer if it meant anything.

The ABERDEEN had about 500 bags of cement that was to be used at the Cape Sable Light on board, and there were many drums of carbide forward that caused much concern to those on board when the water entered the ship. About twenty-five crewmembers went ashore to the Seal Island Light Station, by the ABERDEEN's boats, and the remainder remained with the vessel to assist the tug C D belonging to Hugh Cann and Son, in salvaging as much of the wreck as they could.

The ABERDEEN was considered one of the best ships in the government fleet at the time and just prior to the accident had been given a good refit, and was in excellent condition. Those aboard were fortunate she settled on the ledge, because had she slid off this ledge there would have been little chance of any surviving the incident. The ABERDEEN had been based at Saint John since 1913.

RAIFUKU MARU JRF

Al Smith was transferred from Cape Sable VCU to Camperdown VCS and was on duty from six AM until noon of April 21st, 1925. At about 8:30 AM he received a distress call from the Japanese freighter RAIFUKU MARU with call sign JRF.

Captain Hikota Izeki in command of the RAIFUKU MARU had sailed on April 18th, 1925, from Boston with a full cargo of wheat bound for Hamburg, Germany. The RAIFUKU MARU had been built in 1918 by Kawasaki Dockyard Company Limited and was registered in the port of Kobe, Japan. She was a steel screw steamer with the dimensions of 385 feet in length, 51 feet in breadth, a depth of 36 feet, making her gross tonnage 5857 tons and a net tonnage of 4259 tons. Kokusai Kisen Kabushiki Kaisha in Japan was her owner. This was before the amalgamation of the wireless and flag call signs and her flag call was RFBQ.

When the RAIFUKU MARU departed Boston she had on board a total complement of thirty-eight men, including Captain Izeki and twenty-nine year old wireless operator Masao Hiwatari. Mr. Hiwatari had lived for a time in the United States and was fairly proficient in the English language. His wife and baby son were at his home in Tokyo. He had been a wireless operator for only a few months, having graduated from the Meguro Wireless Telegraph Communication Training Institution, which is now known as the National Electric Communications College, in 1924.

Masao Hiwatari's wireless station JRF was manufactured by An'naka Electric Company, which is now one of the largest manufacturers of electronics in Japan (now called Anritsu Electric Company Limited). This was a three frequency transmitting installation, capable of transmitting on 300, 600, and 800 meters. Both the main and auxiliary installations were of the quenched gap spark type, the main having a power of seven kilowatts input, and the auxiliary having a power of 0.5 kilowatts input. This power was measured at the input to the motor generator.

Shortly after the RAIFUKU MARU cleared the port of Boston, she ran into the worst storm recorded for the month of April 1925, and was soon in trouble. Having sailed with a number of cargoes of wheat, I know like the others who have hauled it, that it must be held in the ship so that it is unable to shift in any way. Wheat is a lot like water and will run in about the same way. If such a cargo breaks loose in the hold of a ship it will run from side to side with the ease of water. It will run or shift to one side of the ship and this shift in weight distribution will prevent the ship from righting herself from the initial roll that caused the shift. Another bad feature of wheat, making it a much worse cargo than water, is that if the wheat gets wet it will swell and will burst anything including the ship. Just exactly what took place in RAIFUKU MARU is not clear but she was soon in serious trouble and the only weather observations on record, for that area, are those taken by the staff of Sable Island VCT. These indicate this storm commenced as a force four-easterly at one AM on April 23rd. Getting caught in one of these storms off this coast is bad enough when everything is as it should be. When it is not, whoever is in such a position is in serious trouble.

When Al Smith received Masao Hiwatari's SOS call it was also received by the White Star Liner HOMERIC. A sister ship of REPUBLIC and TITANIC. The closest coast station is always the controlling station, so Al cleared everyone off 600 meters (500-kHz) and took charge of the communications. This was done by transmitting QRT (stop transmitting) SOS, and sent a cold shiver up the spine of all that heard it. HOMERIC at the time of receiving this SOS was seventy miles from the RAIFUKU MARU.

Captain Roberts in HOMERIC was advised and he immediately altered course and ordered his Chief Engineer to give HOMERIC all the speed he could. It must have been one merry old ride because the HOMERIC crew managed twenty knots in covering the seventy miles and put themselves alongside, as close as they could, to RAIFUKU MARU. A quick look into HOMERIC making this trip would have been most interesting. The crew up forward must have felt as though they were in the head of a jackhammer rather than the foc'sul of their ship, as she hammered her way through each sea. In the engine room, each engineer would have been hanging on with one eye fixed on every gauge he had, and the other eye on every safety valve which would have been rattling as though ready to blow at any instant. The stokers in the stoke hold of HOMERIC, a spoon fed coal burner, would have looked like a bunch of mad black fools as they madly shoveled coal into her fire boxes. Up on her bridge you could have heard a pin drop, as possibly more than one quartermaster held her on a steady arrow-straight course. Captain Roberts and his mates would have been hanging on in dead silence, listening to every squeak and rattle, and fixed on each and every sea, for the first possible sign of over doing it. The cooks in her galley would have been up to their usual tricks, cursing everything in general and all the while doing their best to keep things in a normal working routine, yelling among themselves to be heard above the rattling and banging from their drawers and cupboards of utensils.

In HOMERIC's wireless room, the Chief Wireless Operator would have been wrapped in a death grip with his legs around his chair, each and every pop of static sounding like a rifle crack in his headphones. All the time logging every bit of Morse heard, with one hand hovering close to his large brass transmitting key ready to acknowledge anything instantly. All the while his main Spark Transmitter would have been roaring away totally ignored by everyone, even when they came in for an up-date on any new developments.

Just as HOMERIC reached RAIFUKU MARU Masao Hiwatari made his last transmission:

“NOW VERY DANGER COME QUICK”.

The RAIFUKU MARU crew had tried to get off in their boats, but failed. All their boats were smashed from the high seas when they tried to launch them and were lost.

Captain Roberts laid the HOMERIC alongside RAIFUKU MARU as close as he could. He found her with a list of thirty degrees and quite unmanageable. There was nothing the HOMERIC crew could do to rescue the crew of the RAIFUKU MARU. HOMERIC would have only carried a small amount of oil for lubricating and would have been unable to pump any great amount of oil on the water to help quiet the sea. The sea would have been mountainous after a storm of such force had been in the area for such a long time.

Shortly after HOMERIC arrived, having done everything possible to assist them she watched RAIFUKU MARU sink with all thirty-eight men still on board. It must have been one of the worst experiences for each and every crewmember on HOMERIC. HOMERIC remained in the area for awhile hoping to pick up survivors, but none could be found.

At 11:15 AM Al Smith at Camperdown VCS received the following message from Captain Roberts:

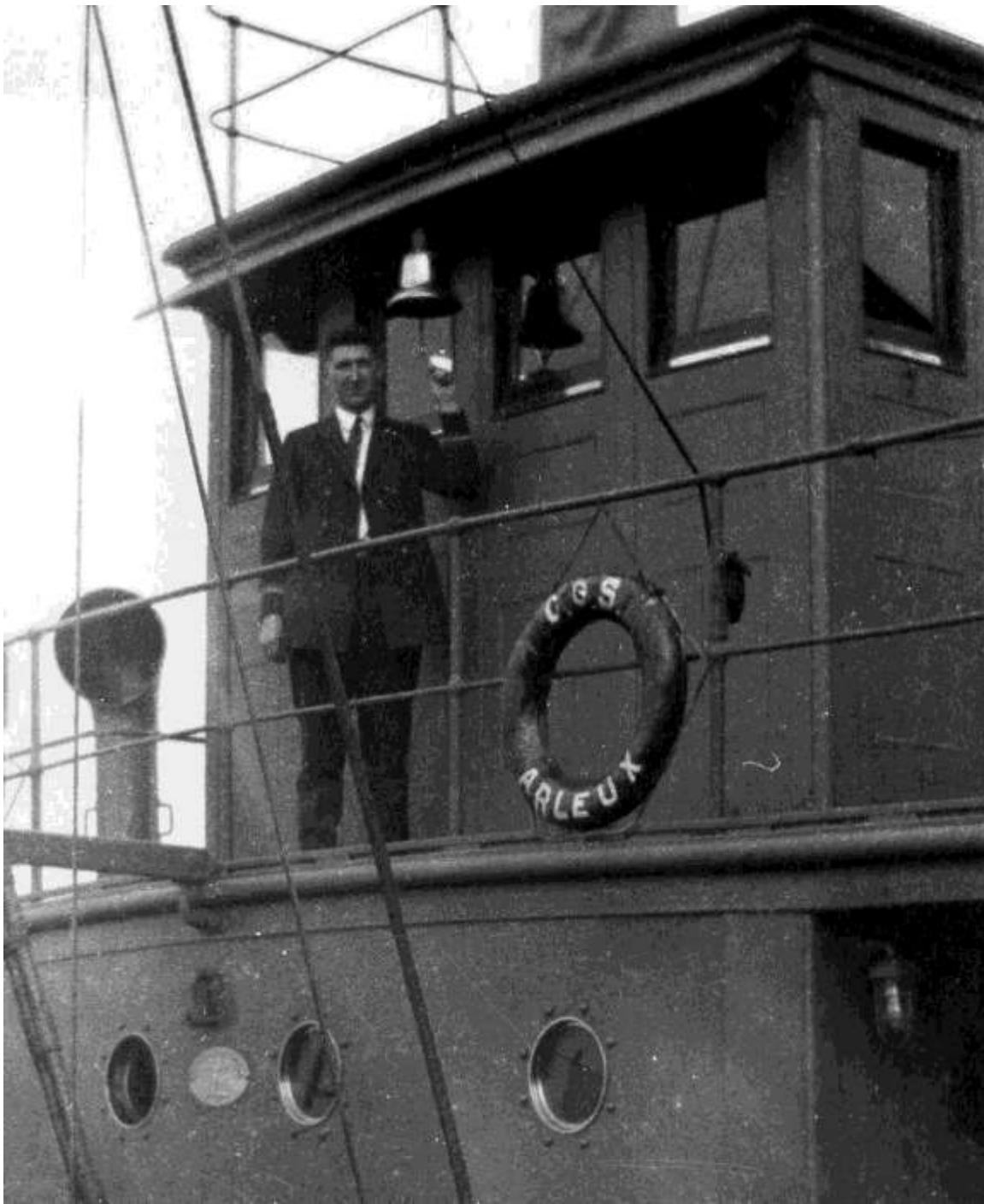
“OBSERVED STEAMER RAIFUKU MARU SINK IN LAT 4143N LONG 6139W
REGRET UNABLE TO SAVE ANY LIVES”.

The British steamer KING ALEXANDER was also in the vicinity but was unable to participate and unable to reach RAIFUKU MARU. The Canadian Government Ship ARLEUX with call sign CFL was alongside at Halifax on Tuesday, April 21st, 1925, and left immediately and remained in the area searching for bodies, returning Saturday, April 25th, 1925, she was unable to locate any bodies or wreckage from RAIFUKU MARU. I was unable to locate the ARLEUX's log. This would have been interesting, if nothing else it would have given an accurate description of the weather and sea conditions she experienced.



Acme Newspictures Inc.

This is the SS RAIFUKU MARU sinking with all hands.



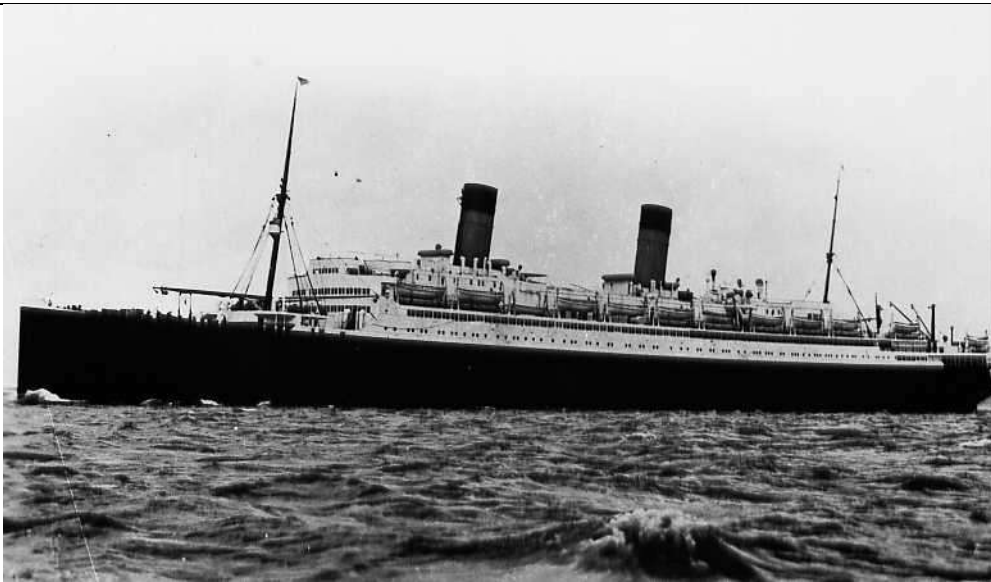
Warren E. Hagar

This is Wireless Operator Warren Hagar ringing the ship's bell on ARLEUX in 1926.



Warren E. Hagar

CGS ARLEUX



World Ship Society

HOMERIC

When news of this disaster broke in Japan, the Japanese press gave it wide coverage blaming the loss of their seamen on racial prejudice. This I find impossible to believe. HOMERIC was a passenger liner of 34,356 tons, and her crew would have contained some of the finest seamen in the world. How Captain Roberts could have elevated himself to such a position and still hold racial prejudice as part of his makeup, would be rather hard to believe. Besides, at this time all the mates under Captain Roberts would have held Extra Master Mariners Certificates. This certificate was the highest of all marine certificates and was mandatory for a position of junior mate in these passenger liners. I am convinced that all possible was done in the attempt to rescue these seamen.

According to the Japanese press articles I was able to locate on this incident, they were blaming racial prejudice on reports from the HOMERIC passengers after they landed in New York a few days later. Passengers, on most anything, can perform some amazing feats after they have been safely landed back on terra firma. If the truth of the matter were known, I feel confident there was more racial prejudice in any one of the passengers in HOMERIC, at the scene and during their mad race, than there was among all the crew.

This press coverage did some interesting things in Japan. It prompted the Empress and Emperor of Japan, to express their sympathy publicly and to provide a three hundred-yen allotment to the bereaved of each and every crewmember. It also prompted the Japanese Seamen's Union to hold special meetings at Kobe,

making it known that more should be done to secure the rescue of seamen and the better construction of vessels on an international basis. They also made an appeal to world opinion to ignore racial prejudice by all seamen at the scene of a shipwreck. These latter records from this meeting are still on the records of the Japanese Seamen's Union.

I have been unable to locate either Masao Hiwatari's son or widow, but if I ever had to pick a super hero, Masao Hiwatari would be at the top of my list. During the three and one half-hours Al Smith communicated and listened to him, he never made a mistake in Morse code nor did he ask for a repeat. Under such impossible conditions, it is hard to believe, and certainly proves he must have been one fine operator, and must have had nerves of steel.

The part which disturbed me on learning racial prejudice was thought by some to have played a part in the outcome of this incident was that ten years later another Japanese ship, the ENGLAND MARU with call sign JAGD, performed amazing seamanship in the rescue of British and Canadian seamen. They rescued several men, making two trips, from the wreck of the British freighter BERWINDLEA with call sign GTFW that was lost on Dead Man's Rock in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. They did this in an open thirty-foot boat that had no engine and was rowed by the Japanese seamen naked to the waist. This was done in very cold weather and water conditions from the weather side of the wreck, on October 27th, 1935. At one point Japanese Bosun Okabe used himself as a fender to protect the boat. This smashed seven of his ribs and nearly killed him, but he saved the boat. The Japanese boat crew landed the half-frozen survivors on board the Canadian tug FOUNDATION FRANKLIN with call sign VGJQ. She had been trying to salvage BERWINDLEA. This incident is recorded in Farley Mowat's book Grey Seas Under.

It is a shame history has to show us that such could take place, and that good seamen could be accused of racial prejudice after doing all possible, merely because they were not successful. At least I am convinced that all possible was done. As has been said many times, the impossible just takes longer and in this case time ran out and there was "no longer".

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT MERCHANT MARINE (CGMM)

We Canadians have had several fleets throughout our history, but for some reason have not been able to hang on to them. After World War I we had the best known of these fleets, the Canadian Government Merchant Marine (CGMM), owned and operated by the Canadian Government. The Company was incorporated in 1918 and took delivery of its first ship CANADIAN VOYAGEUR in 1919. These ships were a wartime construction project and this fleet became known outside the country in many shipping circles as the "Rat Line". The reason for this title was the house flag flown by this fleet. A Beaver in the canton or hoist of a flag resembled a Rat to most anyone outside this country.

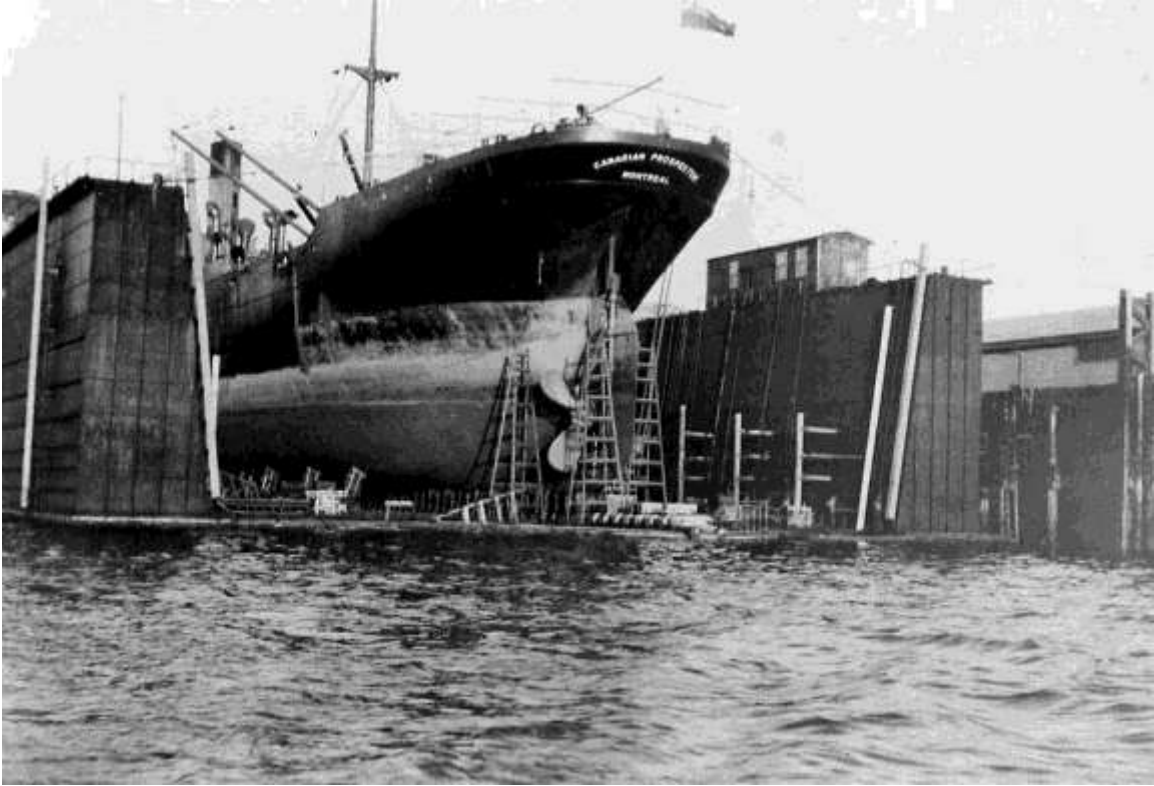
Shortly after forming this company regular schedules were set up between the United Kingdom, the West Indies, Australia, South America, and in the Canadian home trade. The last of this grand undertaking terminated in 1936 when the runs to Australia and New Zealand were discontinued and the remaining ships were sold. I have often wondered if our general attitude towards these things is not the main reason for their demise rather than economic or political conditions. Apparently no one knows the answer for certain. Every so often we hear talk of forming yet another of these fleets.

The CGMM fleet contained sixty ships and the last one was delivered to the Company in 1921. One of these ships is well worth mentioning. CANADIAN RAIDER built in 1920 was not scrapped until 1976 after reliable service for a span of fifty-six years. This record proves we can build them. CANADIAN RAIDER terminated her career as the Spanish ANTONIO DE SATRUSTEGIN with call sign EANB, and held two other names, MARI DOLORES and TENAX, during her lengthy career.

The Canadian Government Merchant Marine (CGMM) fleet 1923:

Flag	Radio	Name
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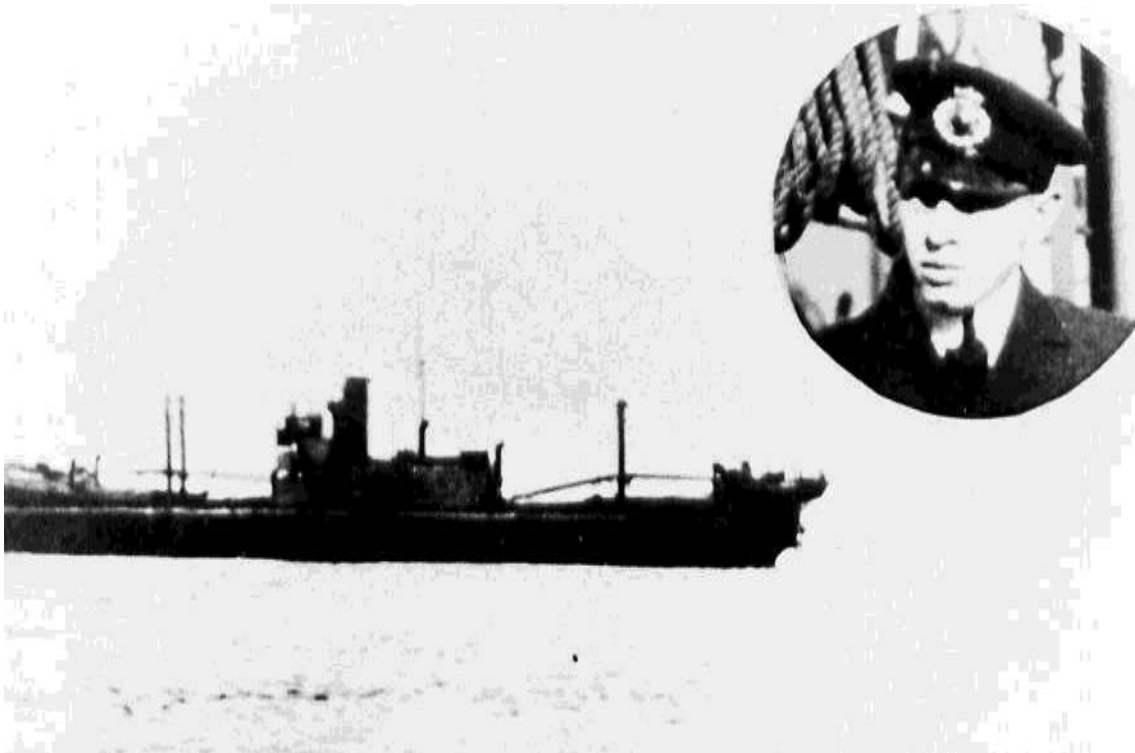
TPNM	XWD	CANADIAN ADVENTURER
TPMB	XWG	CANADIAN AVIATOR
TPRD	XWY	CANADIAN BEAVER
----	VGLT	CANADIAN BRITISHER
TPVN	VGKM	CANADIAN CARRIER
TQGP	VGLY	CANADIAN CHALLENGER
TQFC	VGJW	CANADIAN COASTER
TQDW	VGJL	CANADIAN COMMANDER
TPVJ	VGLX	CANADIAN CONQUEROR
TQHC	VGLZ	CANADIAN CONSTRUCTOR
TQGR	VGNB	CANADIAN CRUISER
TQFW	VGLQ	CANADIAN ENGINEER
TQDB	VGBQ	CANADIAN EXPLORER
TPRC	XWX	CANADIAN FARMER
TQDN	VGBM	CANADIAN FISHER
TQDP	VGBT	CANADIAN FORESTER
TQFL	VGDF	CANADIAN FREIGHTER
TPMK	XWE	CANADIAN GUNNER
TQFH	VGBZ	CANADIAN HARVESTER
TPVQ	VGDC	CANADIAN HIGHLANDER
TPSG	VGBX	CANADIAN HUNTER
TPQC	XWQ	CANADIAN IMPORTER
TPQF	XWT	CANADIAN INVENTER
TQPF	VGJX	CANADIAN LEADER
TQGN	VGLS	CANADIAN LOGGER
TPWS	VGBF	CANADIAN MARINER
TPLB	XVZ	CANADIAN MILLER
TPRB	XWV	CANADIAN MINER
TPMB	XWJ	CANADIAN NAVIGATOR
TPRJ	VGLB	CANADIAN PATHFINDER
TPFR	CKT	CANADIAN PIONEER
TPNQ	XWP	CANADIAN PLANTER



Public Archives Canada PA-96167

This is the CANADIAN PROSPECTOR with international call sign VGPC.

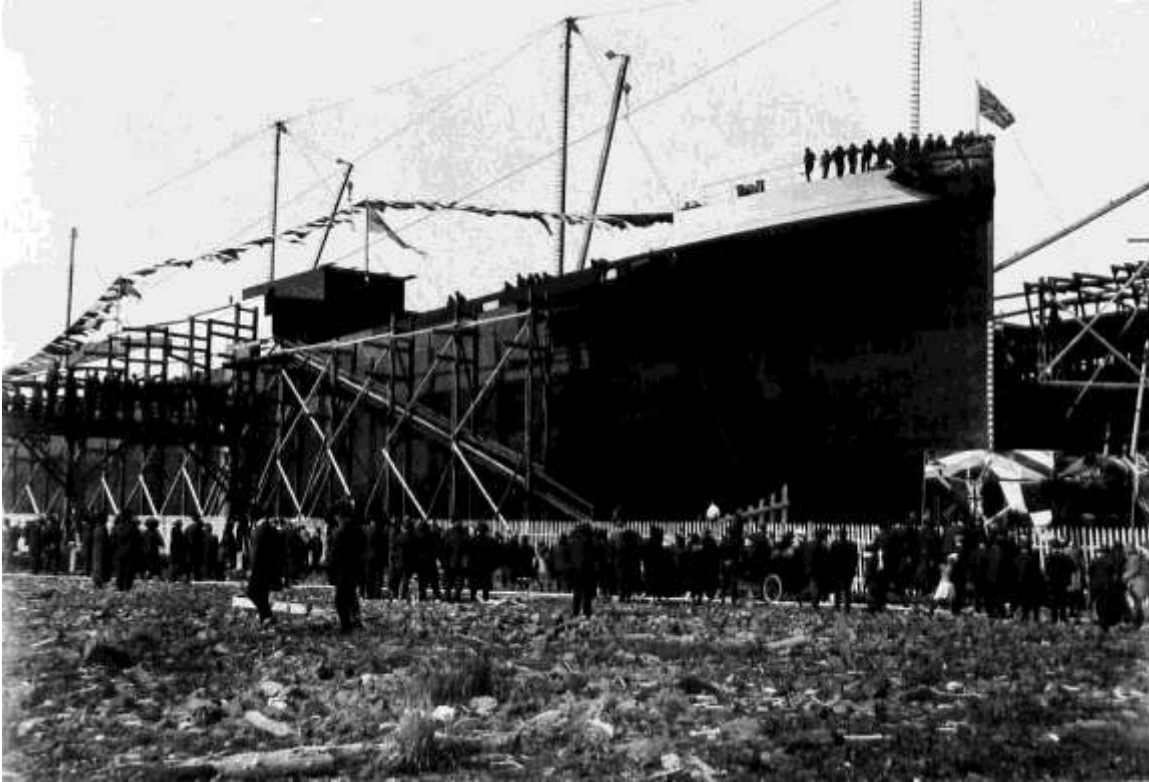
TPQH	XWU	CANADIAN PROSPECTOR
TPNR	XWN	CANADIAN RAIDER
TPNJ	XWO	CANADIAN RANCHER
TPGL	XVF	CANADIAN RANGER



Cyp Ferland

This is the CANADIAN RECRUIT with Wireless Operator Cyp Ferland insert, 1919, and CANADIAN RECRUIT is not on this list

TQDB	VGDZ	CANADIAN ROVER
TPSD	---	CANADIAN RUNNER
TPKC	XVR	CANADIAN SAILOR
TQBD	VGBK	CANADIAN SAPPER



Public Archives Canada PA-96112

This is the CANADIAN SCOTTISH built at Prince Rupert, British Columbia in 1921. It looks like launching day with the crowd that has gathered.

TQGC	VGDK	CANADIAN SCOTTISH
TPNK	XWK	CANADIAN SEALER
TPJG	XVS	CANADIAN SEIGNEUR
TPMV	XWI	CANADIAN SETTLER
TPJQ	XVU	CANADIAN SIGNALLER
TPWK	VGBW	CANADIAN SKIRMISHER
TPMQ	XWH	CANADIAN SOWER
TPMW	XWM	CANADIAN SPINNER
TQBR	VGJT	CANADIAN SQUATTER
TPJF	XVP	CANADIAN TRADER
TPWM	VGBY	CANADIAN TRANSPORTER
TPNW	VGNC	CANADIAN TRAPPER
TQDV	VGBC	CANADIAN TRAVELLER
TPHG	XVN	CANADIAN TROOPER
TPSR	VGBP	CANADIAN VICTOR
TPGD	XVM	CANADIAN VOLUNTEER
TPFQ	CKS	CANADIAN VOYAGEUR
TPFN	XVA	CANADIAN WARRIOR
TQBD	VGDB	CANADIAN WINNER
HWNC	VDZ	SHEBA

As can be seen this makes a total of sixty-two ships counting SHEBA. This fleet must have lost CANADIAN RUNNER and CANADIAN RECRUIT early in its history because they do not appear in the 1923 List of Radio Stations. You will note that the changing to a four character Radio Call Sign and the combining of the Radio and Flag Call Signs did not come easy. It took a period of over a decade to accomplish this. The four-letter Radio Call Sign came first in the early 1920's, and this call sign was to

become the standard call sign for ships after the many conventions that were held around 1933. You will also note duplicates in the Flag Call Signs; i.e. CANADIAN WINNER/CANADIAN SAPPER, and CANADIAN NAVIGATOR/CANADIAN AVIATOR. Since these are the actual records, these calls are accurate – “Hey, you are using my call sign”. “No I’m not, you’re using mine”. How this came about and how it terminated would be rather interesting.

These ships had Marconi Wireless Telegraphy Company (now Canadian Marconi Company) stations, and all the operators were employed by MWTC. All had four transmit frequencies, 300, 450, 600, and 800 meters. They were not listed with the amount of power available. They were listed with the range in miles. That was the practice at the time. Some were listed as 200 miles, the majority 250 miles, and a few at 300 miles, meaning there must have been three distinct power outputs or for some reason the rigging of their antenna lowered or raised this figure.

SHEBA with radio call sign VDZ was an interesting vessel. She was part of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine but her station was operated differently. It was under the authority of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. From this arrangement it was discovered after some time, that her operator was being paid twice, from the two sources. He refused to give up one-half of the money he had been paid, claiming he was paid for services rendered. From the detail I could learn on this bit of choice information, he did not pay back this money and this involved a court case of some description. This particular operator retired as the top executive officer of a large Canadian company. Many of these operators were to go on to become top executives in one field or another. One of these started out as an operator in the old GYPSUM PRINCE (built 1927) and became an Admiral in the Royal Canadian Navy, Admiral Bill Christie.

In addition to this sixty ship CGMM fleet, there were another 189 ships carrying operators, listed in this 1923 List of Canadian Radio Stations. The International Call Sign Blocks allotted to Canada at the time were:

CFAA – CFZZ
CHAA – CHZZ
CJAA – CKZZ
GTPA – GTSZ
GTV A – GTZZ
VAAA – VGZZ
XVAA – XWZZ



Captain John H. Campbell

This is John H. Campbell on the left and Bill Snailham.
Bill was Wireless Operator of SS LENGAN in 1927

MARITIME FISH AND NATIONAL FISH

Prior to World War II Maritime Fish and National Fish were the predecessors of what became National Sea Products Limited. All their larger vessels carried wireless stations and carried operators. Many an operator obtained his start around this coast in one of these ships. Their wireless stations were leased from Canadian Marconi. This was the practice for most ships back then. The operators for this fleet were employees of Maritime Fish or National Fish.

The purpose of the operator on these large fishing vessels was to maintain contact with the shore office via telegram and to obtain bearings from the direction-finding stations ashore in order for the Captain to obtain a good fix on his position. It was normal for the operator to obtain these bearings first thing each morning, whenever they got a good catch, and for any other reason. With these Canadian Fishing Vessels were often several British fishing vessels chartered by Maritime Fish and National Fish and many American vessels. The coast station operator would take many of these bearings, as many as forty or more, during the normal working shift of one of the operators.

ST. CUTHBERT was a fishing vessel that came from Fleetwood, Lancashire, England, in 1930. Her wireless operator on the trip over was Jack Maher. Jack retired as the Technical Station Manager of VCS, turning the station over to Gus Crewe, in July 1970.

ST. CUTHBERT was twenty-nine days in crossing the Atlantic to Nova Scotia. Her wireless room consisted of a cramped little cubbyhole that contained both the equipment and the operator's living space, a bunk for sleeping. Her wireless equipment consisted of a ¼ kilowatt quenched gap spark transmitter and the receiver was a two-tube oscillating detector. This would not reach all the way across the Atlantic, or either side from mid-Atlantic, but Jack was able to contact a passenger liner somewhere around mid-Atlantic. This liner gave him their position and notified Cape Race VCE of their position. Of course Jack received the enervating message in return that most of us have received at one time or another during our careers at sea. VCE had the passenger liner advise Jack that they were ten days overdue. You can be

pounding to pieces trying to get somewhere close to schedule, and always there is someone to advise you that you are adrift, which normally is the only reason you contacted them in the first place. ST. CUTHBERT arrived okay, her crew ravenous as they had been without solid food for two days.



The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited

This is the wireless room on the British Trawler KING'S GREY. A typical fishing vessel installation of the 1920's and much the same as those fitted in Canadian fishing vessels.



27586 *The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited*

The steam carrier CAESAR, owned by Hellyer's Steam Fishing Company Limited, Hull, United Kingdom, was the first fishing vessel ever to have wireless equipment on board. She was fitted in June 1913 by the Marconi Marine Company, which, at the same time installed wireless equipment on board the trawler OTHELLO, also owned by Hellyer's.



S63745 *The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited – Picture by courtesy of 'Wireless World'*

A group of those concerned in the installation in 1913 of the first wireless equipment ever to be fitted on board a fishing vessel. This was the carrier CAESAR, owned by Hellyer's Steam Fishing co., Ltd., of Hull, England.

It is hard for one to fully appreciate the feeling we have had in earning our Certificate of Proficiency in Radio and then learning that we were to report as Radio Officer in a ship. Earning our certificates is probably the hardest and most rewarding thing most of us have ever done. Shortly after this, on learning you are going to be a Radio Officer in a ship, all by yourself, with all the memories of the Radio School Instructor fresh in your mind. Stating how the crew is relying on you, and you alone, to notify the world of their possible distress, all the stories you have read and heard of the glamour and excitement of ships sailing to far-off ports, - can one imagine a more exciting moment?

When I heard I had been chosen Radio Officer for the BOUNTY, a square-rigged sailing vessel built and used for filming the movie Mutiny on the Bounty, I had just received my second class certificate from Radio College of Canada. Although I had served as a radio operator in three naval frigates prior to this, I was most excited. Because of the publicity given this vessel, the telephone directory had a colour picture of her on the cover. As I received confirmation of my position as radio officer I was looking at her picture just underneath the phone. I did not hang up the telephone on termination of the call – merely tossed it into the air and yelled.

Of all the fellows starting out, I do believe the one I know who got off to the poorest start was Walter H. Wooding. Walt received his second class certificate, and while waiting for a job taught radio at the Johnson's Radio School on Hollis Street in Halifax. He was notified that he was to report to VIERNOE as her Radio Officer, and like most of us became very excited about it. It made no difference that the vessel was a fishing trawler.

At the time Walt had an old Model T Ford car. He had stripped this down and made it into a "run-around-bug". This vehicle had to be started by cranking the engine with a crank. The night before he was to sail he went down to the radio school for the evening. When he left to return home, in his excitement, he advanced the spark on the old Model T too far. This caused the engine to "back fire" when he cranked it. This back-firing broke Walt's right wrist, but he managed to sail on time complete with his wrist in a cast, and managed to transmit Morse code with the wrist until he learned to send with his left hand.

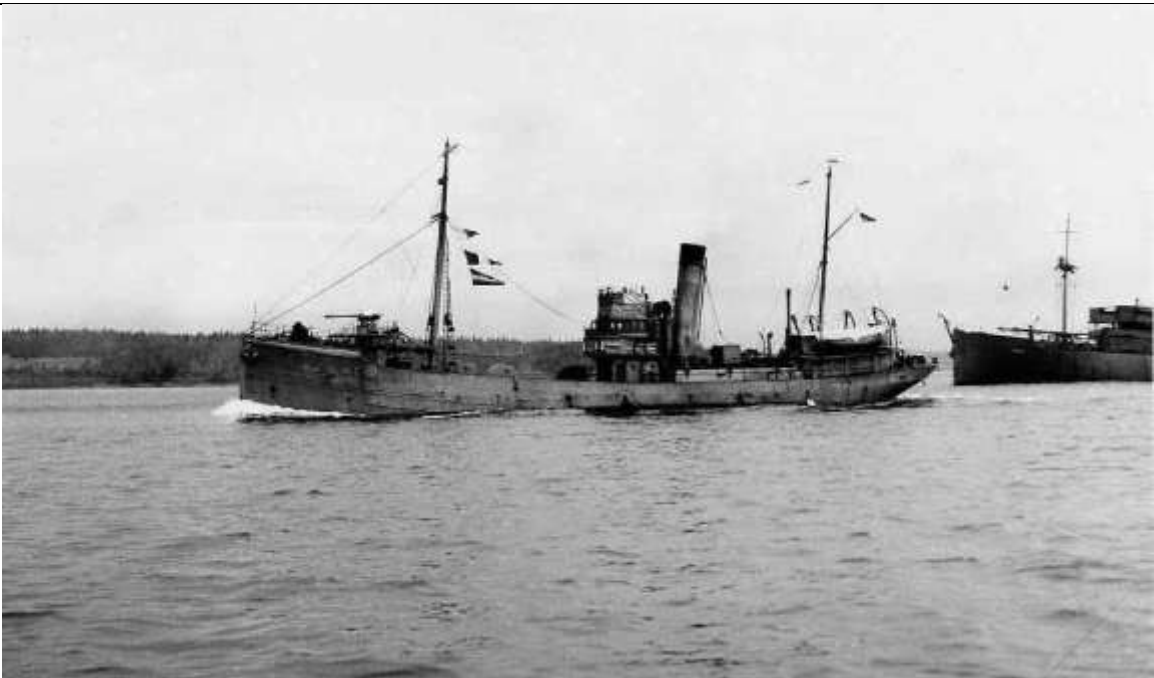
Walt was later transferred to one of the sister vessels, and this proved an interesting experience. The previous operator had been fired for drinking and when he learned he had been fired, he went back aboard and put the spark transmitter out of tune. Walt was at sea before he realized this, and had one heck of a time getting this transmitter to work.

Shortly after this Walt joined a "rum-runner" and then crossed over to the Department of Marine and Fisheries, as a National Revenue Preventive Service operator and RCMP Marine Section operator. From there he was transferred to Camperdown VCS and spent time at this station around 1938.



Public Archives Canada S-85

HMCS VENOSTA



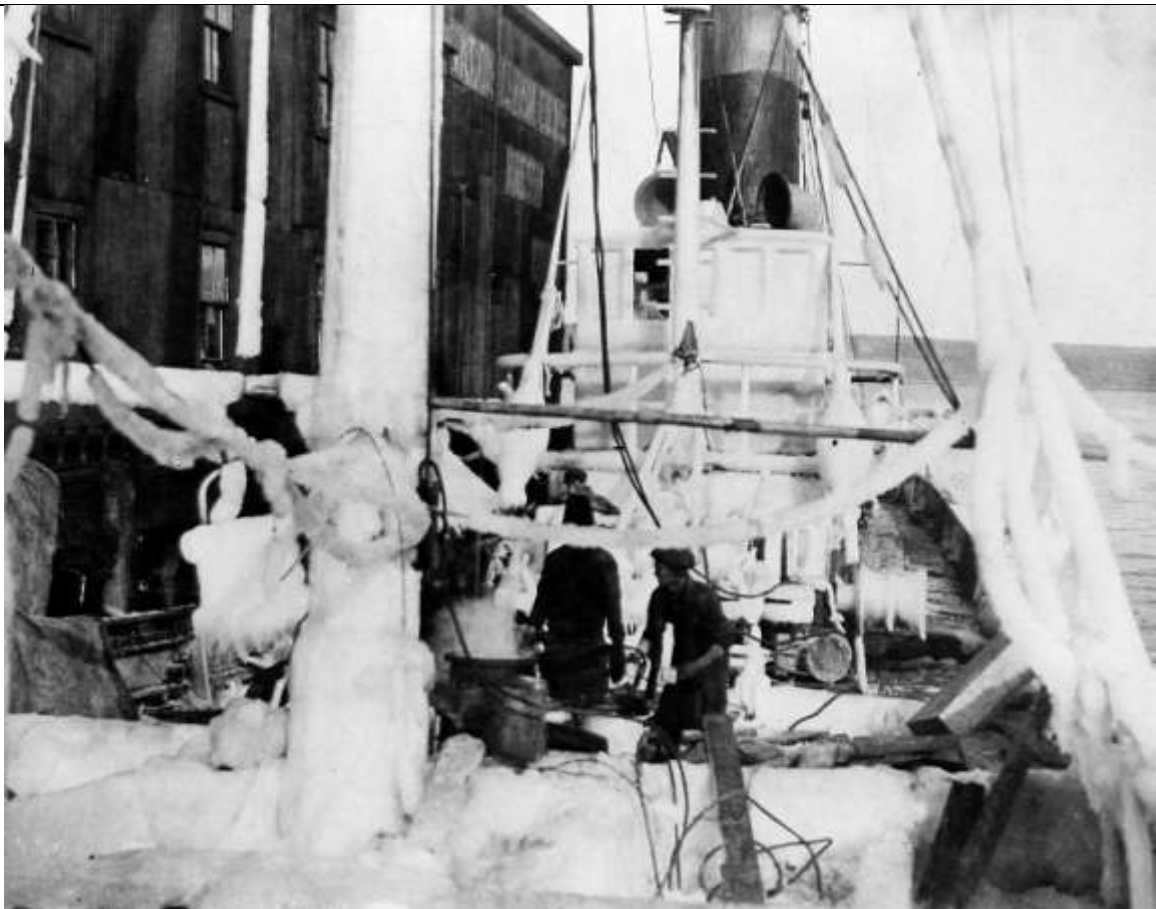
Public Archives Canada S-45

HMCS VIERNOE



Clyde Thornhill

This is some of the VIERNOE crew in 1946 with the mate Clint Thompson in the center and Ellison Thornhill on the far right.



This is the only photograph of the Steam Trawler GOOD HOPE that I have found.



Nova Scotia Museum

FV LEMBERG

Three of these fishing vessels became naval vessels during World War II. HMCS VENOSTA and HMCS VIERNOE were minesweepers from October 1939 until January 1941. From June 1941 until January 1942 they were Gate Vessels at Sydney, Nova Scotia. To enable friendly vessels to enter the port, the job of these ships was to open and close the gates in the nets strung across Sydney harbour to prevent enemy submarines from entering. They were returned to Maritime Fish and National Fish in January 1942.

HMCS RAYON D'OR was a minesweeper loop-layer from 1944 until 1945. No doubt you are familiar with the type of vessel known as a minesweeper and know her duties, but a loop-layer is a vessel that lays a system of electric cables on the sea floor. These cables are connected to instruments ashore and are calibrated to indicate the presence of a vessel when it comes within a certain distance of these cables.

Patrick Falvey was Radio Officer for ten days in the fishing trawler CAPE AGULHAS during 1940. Her radio station consisted of the Marconi MST-MSA receivers and had only the one transmitter, the "Bird Cage Affair" with an output of 50 watts. It was identical to the larger transmitter with the 100 watts output.

Known Canadian Fishing Vessels fitted with wireless between World War I and World War II:

Flag	Radio	Name	Year and Place built
TVHR	----	GOOD HOPE	1903 Hull, England
----	VGJF	LEMBERG	1914 Shelby, Great Britain

JMLB	VGZJ	ST. CUTHBERT	1915 Shelby, Great Britain
----	VGNW	VIERNOE	1914 Shelby, Great Britain
----	VGCS	VENOSTA	1917 Shelby, Great Britain
----	VGfJ	RAYON D'OR	1912 Beverley, Great Britain
----	VOBV	CAPE AGULHAS	1919 Shelby, Great Britain
----	VXRJ	CAPE AGULHAS	Registry changed from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

GOOD HOPE was sunk at 11:50 AM on Saturday, March 16th, 1929, after being in collision with the Norwegian passenger liner STRAVANGER FJORD, in the approaches to Halifax harbour. I believe her wireless operator at the time was the late Jim Rogers, who retired as Regional Superintendent Radio Regulations, Edmonton Region, but I was unable to learn the full detail of this. No lives were lost in this incident.

LEMBURG stranded on Sable Island, September 12th, 1937, and became a total loss.

ST. CUTHBERT was sold to Warren Transportation Company Limited, Belize, British Honduras, on September 15th, 1936, and sailed for that country never to return.

CAPE AGULHAS grounded and sank Halifax approaches, on January 6th, 1956.

VIERNOE, VENOSTA, and RAYON D'OR were laid up on the Dartmouth side of Halifax harbour. What exactly became of them I do not know but quite likely cannibalized for their steel from time to time, until nothing was left.

Thanks to Clyde Thornhill I was able to obtain some photographs of the fishing on board CAPE AGULHAS. Clyde was the Bosun in the vessel from 1940 until 1952.



Clyde Thornhill

This is some of the crew in CAPE AGULHAS, Elios on the far left, Captain Frank Green, Chief Engineer Frank Green, Jr., Cook Bill Riggs and Deck Hand Max Dodge.



Clyde Thornhill

This is the crew on CAPE AGULHAS with Clyde Thornhill in the back row on the far left.



Clyde Thornhill

The man in the top bunk is unknown, Tom White in the bottom bunk and Ernie Thornhill. Ernie saved the CAPE AGULHAS crew when she went ashore one time by running a Breeches Buoy up on the beach. This incident happened several years before CAPE AGULHAS was lost. Ernie went to another vessel, the RAYON D'OR, and was hit with a block in an accident and was killed.



Clyde Thornhill

This is bringing the buoy on board the CAPE AGULHAS.



Clyde Thornhill

This is the net coming on board with Nelson Williams on the far left, the man in the middle is unknown and Bill Dollard from Canso on the far right.



Clyde Thornhill

This is the net when it first came up on the water with 20,000 of fish.



Clyde Thornhill

This is the net coming in on board with the 20,000 of fish off Sable Island, Nova Scotia.



Clyde Thornhill

The net with the 20,000 of fish has been emptied.



Clyde Thornhill

This is another view of the 20,000 of fish on board. The winch that operates the net is in the foreground and it was Bosun Clyde Thornhill's job to operate this winch.



Clyde Thornhill

The crew in CAPE AGULHAS is cleaning, washing and stowing the fish they caught in the holds.



Warren E. Hagar

This is a Portuguese Fishing Schooner on the Grand Banks in 1930. Many will remember the Portuguese fishing fleet from their use of a Cootie Key to transmit radiotelegraph.

RUM RUNNING

Prohibition got a good foothold in the United States after a number of years and a lot of work from various groups. After 1919 it was illegal to make, buy, transport, sell, and about anything else, one could think of regarding beer, gin, rum, whiskey, and wine. This may have sounded good to the group's who worked hard for it, but those who wanted to drink liquor were going to drink regardless, and the time known as the rum-running era was given birth. This proved a most colourful part of the history of that century.

Looking back at the history of this rum-running era, the thing that fascinates me was that it came to an end. Everyone was having a grand old time making money at it, including those against it, who were making money holding lectures against the subject and receiving very good fees for participating in these gatherings. Those doing the rum running were anyone and everyone. Those in charge of the rum running, apparently in a lot of cases, were also the ones in charge of trying to stop it.

Boats of all types and sizes, either took to running liquor or were on the other side, that of trying to prevent it. The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon (French possessions) on the south coast of Newfoundland, and the islands of the West Indies, were the major ports on the Atlantic coast where liquor was loaded. There was also liquor being manufactured in this country for export. The majority of this was shipped in vessels that should not have returned for months, but returned to port a few hours after leaving. With all the Customs Officials in on the racket, what more could one expect? Looking at the records left, you will find everything in order. Anything that might hold something against anyone has merely been left blank. Any signatures were nothing more than unintelligible scrawls. The crews of the rum running vessels were definitely breaking the law. To say they were criminals would be stretching the term criminal to the limit. One has to realize that especially during the depression, which became world wide during this era, a job of any description was very hard to find. Most of these men were glad to have the work in order to make an income of some description. Quite often they did the rum running until they were able to find work on one of the patrol vessels. This was true with the wireless operators and a number of them got their start in the "rum runners" and then crossed over to the government side.

All the coast stations handled messages from the "rum runners" that had licensed wireless stations. The messages transmitted were coded and copies of these messages were given to the government officials. It was not long until the government officials broke their codes and were able to "read the mail".

Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, was one of the larger rum running ports and a center for a good portion of the rum running activity, and a certain individual there made a good living installing wireless stations for the rum running vessels. These stations were illegal and communicated with illegal coast stations. The authorities complained in the press that they were never able to find these illegal coast stations. A typical example was one station at Saint John, New Brunswick. The Manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia in Saint John approached the Officer in Charge of Saint John Radio VAR, wanting to know if he would consider taking on a part time job, transmitting messages to the rum runners. He stated he was not interested but would mention the job to his operators. One of them jumped at the opportunity. That meant the individual from

Yarmouth went to Saint John and installed a station in the attic of the home of this operator. Therefore this operator was communicating with the patrol vessels during his normal working hours and communicating with the “rum runners” during his hours off. An excellent set-up and no wonder the authorities could not find the illegal coast stations.

A common procedure for the illegal stations in ships to contact these illegal coast stations was the use of three letters. In order to describe this I will use my initials, S G R. The ship would send the letter S three times, then DE the separation signal, and then the letter G three times. The coast station would answer the ship with G three times, DE, and the letter R three times. That way both would know they were communicating with the proper station. The only way a preventive authority could be involved is if he had obtained this prearranged three-letter code.

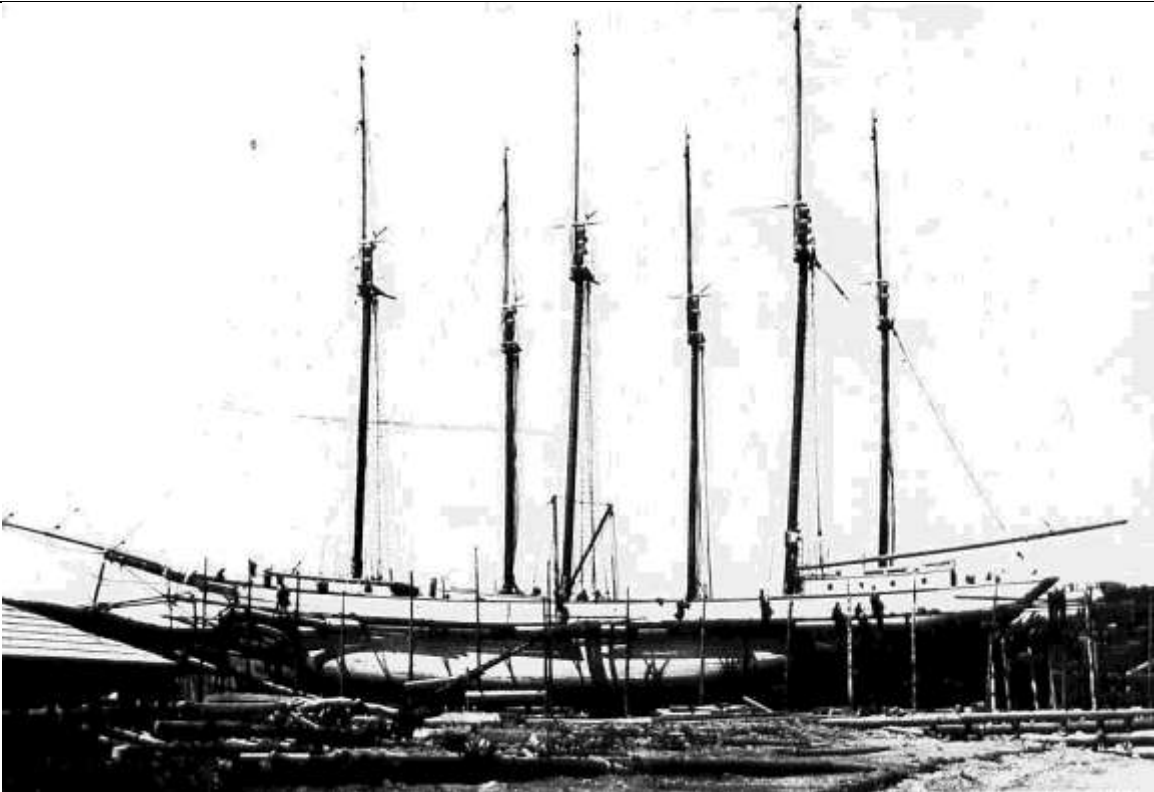
Naturally many ingenious gimmicks, many of them are now memories, found a use for communications between these stations. The best of these rum-running vessels were small and very fast and in most cases better equipped than the patrol vessels. They relied mainly on speed in order to outrun the patrol vessel. The policy was for the larger vessels to lie off the coasts of either Canada or the United States, just outside the International boundaries, with their cargoes of illicit booze and discharge this to smaller faster vessels that would take it ashore. A favourite of the larger vessels was the schooner. Many of these schooners had their masts removed and were fitted with large engines, making them fast and very low in the water. This made them harder to see from a distance. The larger ones were fitted with a direction finder. Shortly after the coastal direction finders entered service these D/F's were scaled down and fitted into ships. The smaller boats used one of the most ingenious navigational aids found. This ingenious navigational aid cost practically nothing to build but was sold by an individual in Halifax for around one hundred dollars. This was fitted in the small fast “rum runners”. It consisted of about six inches of pipe and contained nothing more than a condenser with the necessary pieces of wire to hook it up. This would act like a small spark transmitter. All the engines in use during this era used gasoline and when this unit was fitted into the coil lead of the electrical circuit of the engine it worked very well. Those operating these units knew the engine revolutions necessary for this thing to create a good signal (racket) on the D/F frequencies. Thereby the small pick-up vessel just sat in the water creating this racket while the loaded vessel sailed down to it, from the D/F bearings taken on this signal.

The first sailing ship to be fitted with wireless in Canada was one of the famous Canadian tern schooners, so numerous around the turn of the century. The word tern comes from the Latin word Terni. Terni means three for three masts and is not named for the bird which is quite popular in this area. This schooner was the VINCENT A. WHITE that was built at Alma, New Brunswick, in 1918. She was registered in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia.



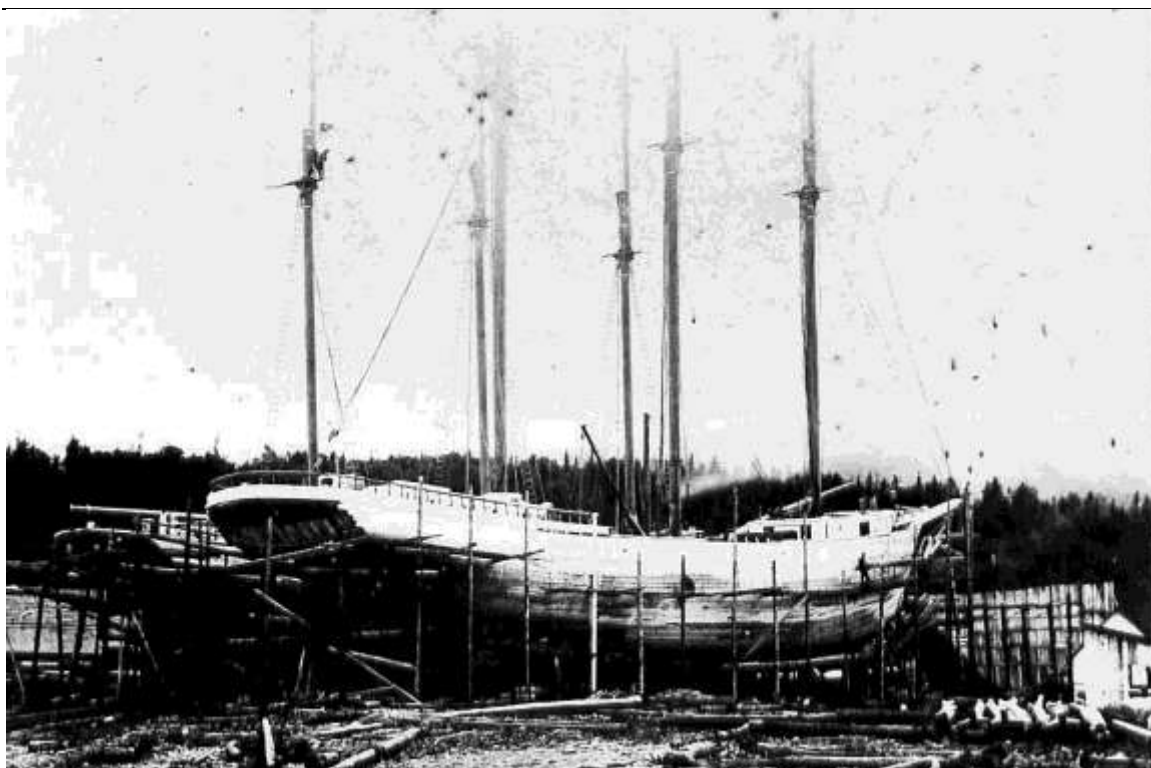
A. K. Smith VE1BY

This is Wireless Operator Al Smith on the left with First Mate, Captain Olsen, at sea on the SV VINCENT A. WHITE, April 1922 on a voyage from Halifax to Glasgow, Scotland.



New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick

This is the VINCENT A. WHITE and another vessel, both under construction at Alma, New Brunswick.



New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick

This is the VINCENT A. WHITE and another vessel under construction at Alma, New Brunswick.



New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick

They are getting ready to launch the VINCENT A. WHITE, August 7th, 1918.

Her first wireless operator was Alfred K. Smith and he and the gentleman from Yarmouth, installed an illicit station in her in April 1922. This station consisted of a 1-1/2 inch spark coil transmitter and a carborundum crystal receiver. It was installed in Al's cabin, which was with the officer's quarters in the after house of the schooner. The aerial was the standard long wire strung between the main and mizzenmast, with the lead-in running down the mizzen stays. Right after this installation at Saint John, she made a voyage to Halifax and then on to Glasgow, Scotland. VINCENT A. WHITE remained a wind-powered schooner and was not altered by removing her masts and installing an engine. She was launched on August 7th, 1918, and was assigned flag call TNLC. On January 20th, 1926, she changed her name to ESTONIA and her port of registry to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. I was unable to locate any further information on her communication equipment after that date. This illicit station was licensed just prior to the name change, with call sign VGCN, as a receiving station only. This schooner had a most remarkable and fascinating career, if one could ever learn the full detail. As the ESTONIA she was definitely doing

more Rum-running, than the legal trades of lumber and salt cargoes so common to these schooners. In 1926 she was under the command of Captain Spurgeon Geldert of Lunenburg. He is probably best known as the mate under Captain Angus Walters in the famous BLUENOSE. On October 25th, 1935, ESTONIA made her final voyage. She sailed from Turk's Island, West Indies, and encountered a heavy storm, losing her sails and rudder, and was abandoned in a sinking condition. The Norwegian tanker S.S. SOUTH AMERICA rescued her ten man crew, but I have no idea how SOUTH AMERICA found her. By this time the VGCN call sign was assigned to a Police Launch belonging to the British Columbia Provincial Police. Whether or not the wireless station had been removed or used in this rescue is not known.

There were a number of vessels classed as patrol vessels. These belonged to the National Revenue Preventive Service of the Canadian Government, a branch of the Customs Department. A number of them were of Ottawa design. In other words, they were fairly good boats but for the most part were only given sufficient power to enable them to maintain a speed of about half that of the rum-running vessels. The few patrol vessels that could work up a fairly good speed were pretty well restricted to a mundane life of that of a personal yacht for certain government officials. This way the "rum runners" were given a little better chance at not getting caught. One of these vessels was the MARGARET that was built at Southampton, England, and delivered to Customs in Halifax in April 1914. She was immediately taken over by the Navy for the war and returned to Customs at the close of the war. She was assigned wireless call sign VDW and the station was listed as having a range of 150 miles. It was the typical station of the day containing only three transmitting frequencies 300, 600, and 800 meters. MARGARET is the only Custom's vessel listed in the Official List Radio Stations of Canada for July 31st, 1923. Shortly after this date two more vessels, the BAYHOUND and PREVENTOR, were added to the fleet.



C. C. Foster VE1AMF

This is Jack Sugden Wireless Operator in the Customs Patrol Vessel PREVENTOR.

At this time most countries started to assign four letter radio call signs to their ships. Canada was to do the same and some interesting facts come forth, which make little if any sense. BAYHOUND and

PREVENTOR were assigned CGPJ and CGPK respectively. A quick glance at the three prefixes of these calls will tell a lot, CGP-Canadian Government Police. In other words if the rum-running operator remembered those three letters he could then do a lot with his direction finder. If a buddy happened to be around with a direction finder and communications on one of their illicit radios, nothing more need be said. They knew the exact position of these ships from periodic D/F bearings. Assigning these distinctive prefixes definitely did something to the ego of the bureaucrat who authorized them, but there is no sense behind them.

The only other Customs Patrol Vessel fitted with wireless, on which I could find information, turned out to be the most interesting of the lot. Her official name was PATROL BOAT NO. 4 and she was assigned call sign CGPN. Most not only knew her by her former name STUMBLE INN, but they continued to call her by that name. This vessel started out as a World War I Submarine Chaser, but was built a bit late for the war. Somehow she took up the interesting job of running rum, and while doing this, she had the misfortune of being caught. She then became a patrol vessel. The wireless room was also the wireless operator's home, a bunk amongst his equipment that consisted of a cubbyhole at the best. Cec Foster was her wireless operator for a time while she was a patrol vessel.

There were 440 of these boats, which were built and operated by the United States Navy, in service during World War I on both sides of the Atlantic. 121 crossed the Atlantic Ocean under their own power. The loss of two enemy submarines was credited to these boats. Since I have a special interest in boats of this size and type, I found the detail on these most interesting. They were 110 feet in length overall, and had a full displacement of 75 tons. They not only were equipped with wireless during World War I but they shocked many that came near and heard them talking to each other over a primitive radiotelephone. Radiotelephone then, for all intents and purposes, was some distance in the future. Their main propulsion was fascinating. They had three 220 horsepower (at 500 revolutions per minute) main engines and were direct-coupled to three 39-inch propellers having a 57-1/2 inch pitch. The most fascinating part of this detail to me was that these engines were air started and were reversed by air. Each main engine was connected to an individual air compressor. All these boats were equipped with a 10 horsepower gasoline engine with a 4-1/2 kilowatt generator on one end, and a three-inch bilge and fire pump on the other. PATROL BOAT NO 4 must have been a welcome addition to the Custom's fleet. She should have managed nine knots on one engine, ten and one-half knots on two engines, and twelve knots on all three. One would have to agree she was an interesting little vessel. This detail is recorded in the book *Maverick Navy* by Alexander W. Moffat, Captain, USNR (Ret.).

A few of the government patrol vessels managed to fire a shot or two at a rum runner, but this was very rare. If these vessels did have a gun which could handle ammunition that was available, no doubt the crews were only allowed one shot a month, and would have to purchase any additional rounds out of their own pockets. Several patrol boat skippers were told to get out of the way, in more colourful terms, from just behind the business end of a shotgun. Granted a few people got hurt, but on the whole the majority on both sides of the law, thoroughly enjoyed their experiences.

The four Custom's Patrol Vessels that carried wireless operators operating in this area:

VDW	MARGARET
CGPJ	BAYHOUND
CGPK	PREVENTOR
CGPN	PATROL BOAT NO 4



Captain John H. Campbell

This is Gordon MacDonald, Pictou, Nova Scotia and Captain J. H. Campbell in 1928. Gordon MacDonald with the bowler hat is Wireless Operator in SS DAGHELD



Captain John H. Campbell

This is Radio Operator George Lowe about 1930.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE MARINE SECTION

Although the Customs Service probably felt they were doing their duty and convincing their superiors that they were, better heads were to prevail and take up the job of trying to clean up this mess once and for all. This gave birth to one of the finest and most fascinating fleets to operate under the Canadian flag. On April 1st, 1932, the Marine Section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police went into service and took over all the duties of the Custom's Patrol Vessels.

The men in this new organization wore a uniform not unlike the old naval uniforms worn by the Royal Canadian Navy. There were minor differences between the two uniforms. The Cap Tallies read MARINE RCMP SECTION and the large collars on the RCMP uniform had one ½ inch wide white stripe, instead of the Navy's three narrow white stripes. The ranks held by both units were the same and the only difference between the Chief Petty Officer, and Officer's uniform, was the Cap Badge which was the same Cap Badge worn in the Navy with the addition of the letters RCMP across the center of the badge. The Marine Section of the RCMP was permitted to wear moustaches, whereas the Navy members were not. This made for a few interesting incidents between the two units. Many a Navy Officer was to be taken up short for bawling out a man with a moustache to learn on closer examination that he was not navy.

It should be noted that the famous RCMP vessel, the RCMP ST. ROCH that had call sign VGSR, was not a member of the Marine Section. She was a special-built supply vessel constructed in 1928 and remained with "G" Division, the division by which she was built and operated. "G" Division is that section of the Mounted Police that controls their activities in the north. The north is the Yukon Territory, the North West Territories and now the territory of Nunavut that was formed from a section of the North West Territories on April 1st, 1999.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

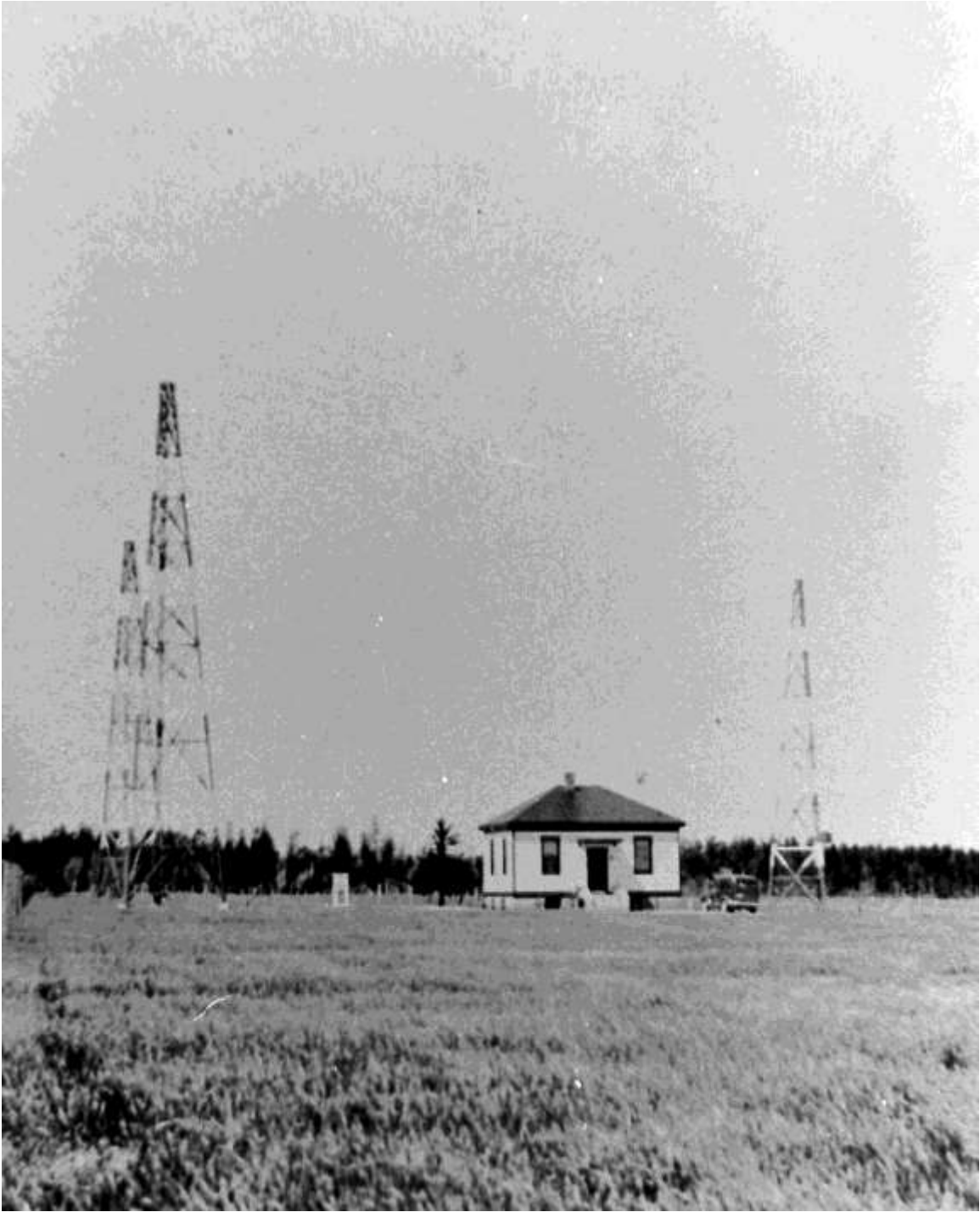
This is the RCMP ST. ROCH with international call sign VGSR and Commanding Officer Henry Larsen in the insert.

SHEDIAC VFU

About the time the Marine Section was formed advances had been made in Aircraft design to the point that a flying boat service was commenced between North America and Europe. One site chosen for these aircraft was Shediac, New Brunswick, because it had the least fog in this area. These flying boats carried radio operators who communicated with ground stations via radiotelegraph, and these operators were carried until the jet aircraft of the early 1960's made them impractical. The majority of these radio operators were absorbed within the aircraft organizations in another capacity. This was another most interesting portion of the history of radiotelegraph and the operators that were involved in its operation.

A station for communication with these aircraft was opened at Shediac with call sign VFU. Reay Bridger, at one time, was Officer in Charge at this station and told me while there he sweated from sheer fear that one day he would have to sit in on the aircraft circuits for another operator. He claimed these flying operators sent such fast clear code he knew he would never be able to keep up with them.

While radio station VFU was in service at Shediac, none of the aircraft communicating through the station was Canadian. Canada's Trans-Atlantic service did not begin until July 1943, when Trans Canada Airlines commenced this service with Lancastrian aircraft. The Lancastrian aircraft were replaced with North Stars in 1947. These two were the only types of aircraft owned by this company that became Air Canada that carried Flight Radio Operators. They carried these operators for just ten years until the position was eliminated in 1953. Communications was maintained with the pilot or first officer by radiotelephone on the domestic routes flown by this organization, including those flown prior to their carrying their first passenger in the spring of 1939. The Lancastrian Aircraft was the famous four-engine Avro Lancaster Bomber converted for carrying passengers.



Warren E. Hagar

This is Shediac Aeradio VFU at Shediac, New Brunswick.



Air Canada 45426

This is the cockpit of a North Star Aircraft with the seats removed. The Captain sat on the front left, the First Officer on the front right, with the Flight Engineer just behind the First Officer. The Radio Officer sat just behind the Captain and a portion of his operating desk can be seen in the photograph.



Air Canada 2256

This is Trans Canada Airlines North Star CF-TFB.



Public Archives Canada PA-61649

This is Avro Lancastrian Aircraft CF-CMW of Trans Canada Airlines in August 1946.



Air Canada X20365

This is William Lucas operating the Radio Station in a Trans Canada Airlines Lancastrian Aircraft in September 1945.



Bill Stempel WIBBJ Greenwich, Connecticut

Sikorsky VS-44 Flying Boat

Large Aircraft on scheduled flights used their actual registration for a call sign, and not a flight number as they do today. All Canadian aircraft had registrations beginning with CF followed by a three-letter suffix, and this has recently been changed to the prefix C with a four-letter suffix. The prefix of the four-letter suffix has a letter from Canada's CFA-CKZ block of international call signs. Three actual Lancastrian registrations/call signs I located were CF-CMT, CF-CMS, and CF-CMW, so these aircraft were issued registrations/call signs from that area of the letters available to Canada. When the North Star, a Canadian built/modified DC-4, joined Trans Canada Airlines, they were issued these registration letters from CF-TEA to CF-TFZ.

The United States uses the letter N as a prefix followed by a number of digits or a combination of digits and letters as the suffix for their aircraft registration identifications. But their aircraft radio call signs in radiotelegraphy were five letters that became the standard identification for aircraft. In other words, three letter radio call signs were coast/ground stations, four letters were ships, and five letters were aircraft. The American Aircraft call signs had the prefix KH from their international block of call sign allotments. The only exception to this that I have found was Howard Hughes. Mr. Hughes had the money and political pull to have his aircraft assigned KHRH. HRH were his initials and this call sign was assigned to his aircraft in 1938 when he and his crew of four flew around the world in 3 days 19 hours. KHRH was a four-letter ship's call sign. The British aircraft are the letter G with a four-letter suffix, the French, the letter F with a four-letter suffix. As can be seen all had a five letter call sign that was used as the radiotelegraph call sign. But the most colourful of these calls were the Italian call signs that had the prefix I and the four letter suffix normally spelled an English word such as I-LADY, I-LOVE, I-LUCY, and so on. At least during the 1950's when the last of these flying "Sparkers" were using Gander Airport with call sign VOAC, the oddball ground station with the four letter call sign rather than the normal three assigned to the other stations around the world.

SHEDIAC BRIDGE VDS

Close to VFU Shediac, New Brunswick, was located another station with call sign VDS. This VDS station was for communication with the RCMP Marine Section Vessels and was located at Shediac Bridge, New Brunswick. VDS would communicate with any RCMP vessel and then pass any message traffic collected to another station located in the Dockyard at Halifax. The call sign of this Halifax station was VDH, believe it or not, another of the many mysteries within our allotment of call signs. The letter S is three dots

in Morse code and the letter H is four dots. With lots of static this must have been somewhat of a nightmare. Luckily these stations were not very close and any confusion would have been reduced because of this. The frequency used for this inter-station communication was around 3,000 kHz. There is also a possibility that VDH Halifax was the remnant of VAA Halifax, although I have been unable to prove this suspicion.

I have found another RCMP station in operation in 1936 in this area. This station was located outside Moncton, New Brunswick and held call sign VFM. I have heard no mention of this station working the Marine Section vessels so assume this station was for the use of the Land Divisions only. This station is mentioned on page 94 of the October, 1936 issue of the amateur radio publication QST. The amateur radio operators attending the Moncton Amateur Radio Hamfest were given a tour of this station. One will probably never know if this station could communicate with stations VDS and VDH.

This meant that these RCMP vessels normally communicated with these two stations, VDS and VDH, but used the regular coast stations from time to time. They always used their international call signs, but the majority of their messages were in code. They would often obtain their positions, during weather conditions of low visibility or for any reason, by requesting that radio bearings be taken from their transmissions. They normally operated under “black out” during the hours of darkness and did not show any lights. As can be seen a radio operator in a “rum runner” with a direction finder would be a welcome asset. Even one with a good receiver, because during the period this radio direction finding service was provided by coast stations it was known as QTF from the International List of Q Signals. QTF means: The position of your station according to the bearings taken by the direction-finding stations I control was --- Latitude --- Longitude. QTF? Would be the interrogative of this statement, both are well known by any radio operators in all of the world’s languages.

This RCMP fleet was also of Ottawa design. Although the Marine Section did a fairly good job of curbing rum-running, having worked closely with the United States Coast Guard, it was World War II that actually put a stop to it, and the fact some States repealed prohibition in 1936. When war was declared in 1939 the Marine Section, including both ships and personnel, was taken over by either the Royal Canadian Navy or the Marine Section of the Royal Canadian Air Force, as were the rumrunners, including a lot of the men who operated the rum running vessels. One thing rum running did accomplish was to make excellent seamen of the men involved.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

This is RCMP LAURIER that became HMCS LAURIER on the outbreak of World War II.

The late Ed Hartling was one of the RCMP Marine operators during this period, and when war was declared he was the wireless operator in RCMP MACDONALD on Canada's West Coast. MACDONALD was new at the time and a very nice vessel. Her interior including the furniture was of oak wood and she was fitted with a standard Marconi station of the period with the Marconi LTT4 as the main transmitter. The identical twin sister of RCMP MACDONALD was the RCMP LAURIER with call sign CGPC, and was also constructed in 1939. Her radio installation was identical. LAURIER became HMCS LAURIER at the outbreak of the war and Norman Hinde was one of her first naval operators. She retained her RCMP Radio Station but used the standard naval two letter coded calls which were changed regularly. Norm said her station was the standard Marconi station of the period. The Main Transmitter was the LTT4, the Main Receiver the National HRO, and the Marconi MF/DF (MDF5). Norm sailed in LAURIER from October 1939 until early 1940.

Ed Hartling was absorbed in the Royal Canadian Navy as a Chief Petty Officer, the rank he held in the Marine Section. This meant only two changes, both in appearance, he had to shave off his moustache and remove the RCMP from his Cap Badge. The Navy must have been quite happy to acquire Ed, because they sent him to HMCS ST. HYACINTHE, in the province of Quebec (the naval radio school of the time), as an instructor. He remained at this post throughout the war teaching thirteen classes in radio operations and was returned to his RCMP career on completion.

The RCMP ST. ROCH remained with the RCMP throughout the war, and made a number of her famous voyages during that time. All of the RCMP vessels fitted with wireless, including ST. ROCH, were fitted with continuous wave equipment. Not one of these vessels ever used spark equipment. Most of these ships were capable of transmitting as high as the six-megahertz marine radiotelegraph frequencies.

The RCMP Marine Section had fifteen vessels equipped with radio and carried radio operators. They were:

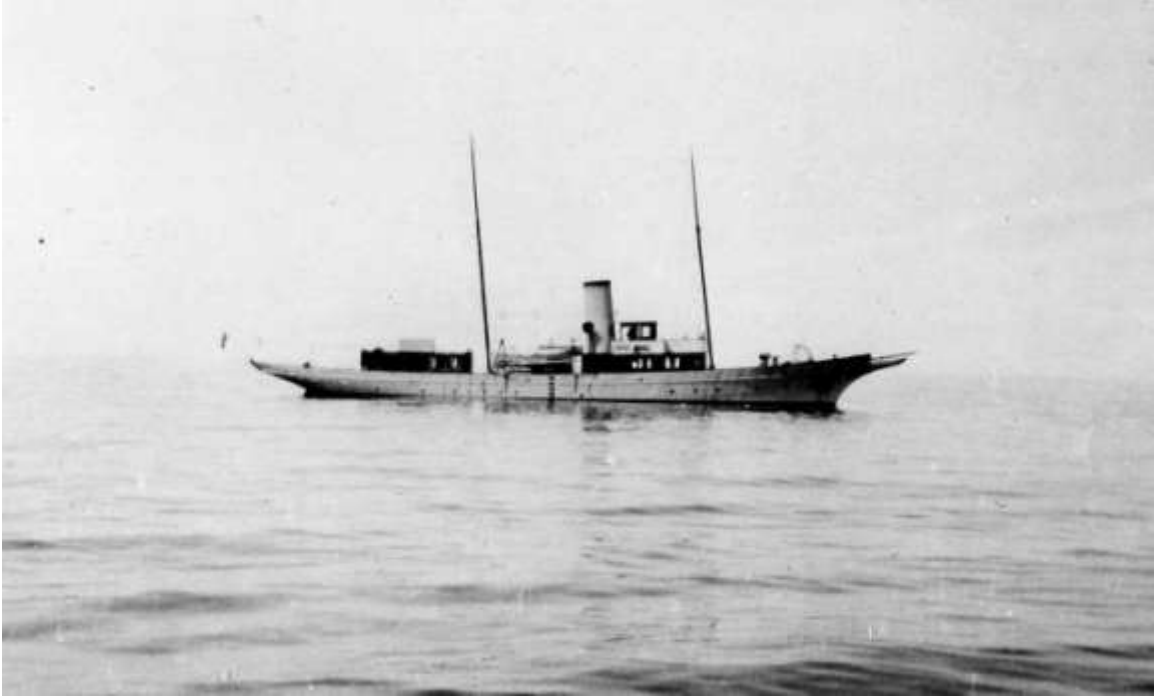
CGPC	LAURIER
CGPD	ACADIAN
CGPF	MACDONALD
CGPL	FLEUR DE LIS
CGPQ	INTERCEPTOR
CGPR	MADAWASKA
CGPS	CHALEUR
CGPT	SCATARIE
CGPV	ULNA
CGPW	ALACHASSE
CGPX	ADVERSUS
CGPY	CAPTOR
CGPZ	DETECTOR
CGSJ	ARRESTEUR
CGSR	FRENCH

As can be seen the “rum runner” had to keep an ear open for only the two, FRENCH and ARRESTEUR that did not have a CGP prefix, but at that they were so similar there was no problem. Note the similarity in the FRENCH and ST. ROCH (VGSR) call signs. Most of these vessels were equipped with Canadian Marconi stations although I was told ARRESTEUR and DETECTOR had stations built from a kit of some description by the first operator. The main transmitters were tuned to the standard frequencies of 300, 600, and 800 meters. Some, if not all, were capable of transmitting as high as six megahertz as mentioned. I believe the Marconi LTT4 was capable of going that high in frequency, possibly with some slight modification.



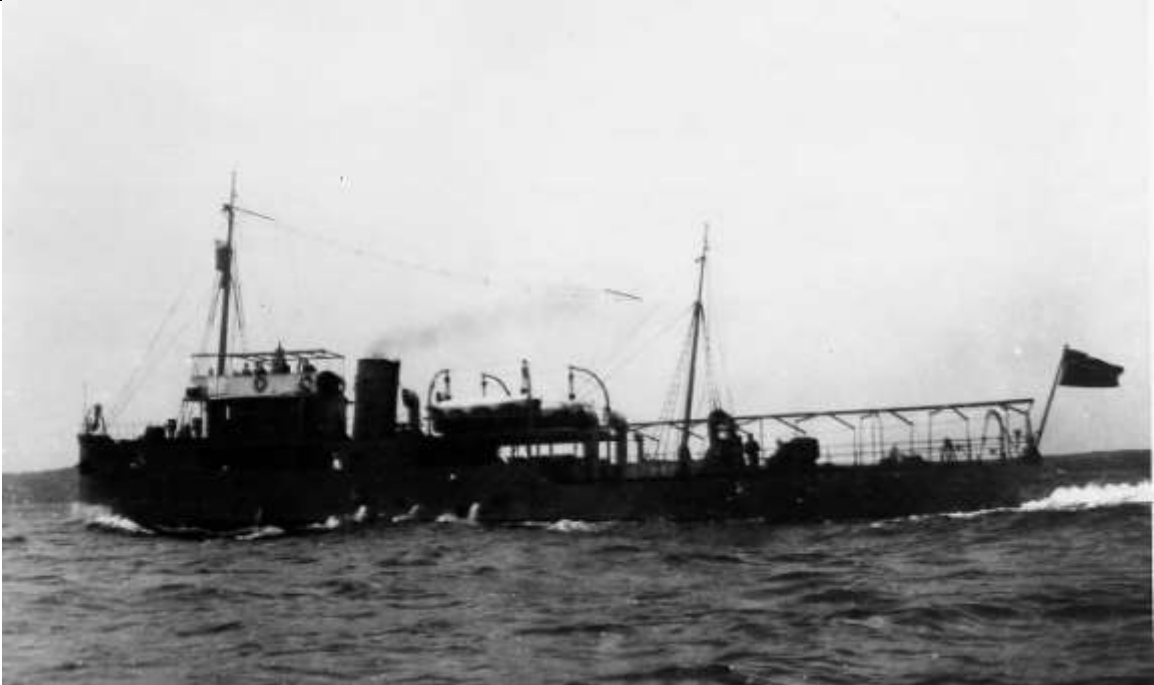
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

This is RCMP FRENCH “Making Her Number”. The four flags in a vertical line are read from the top to the bottom C G S R.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP ULNA



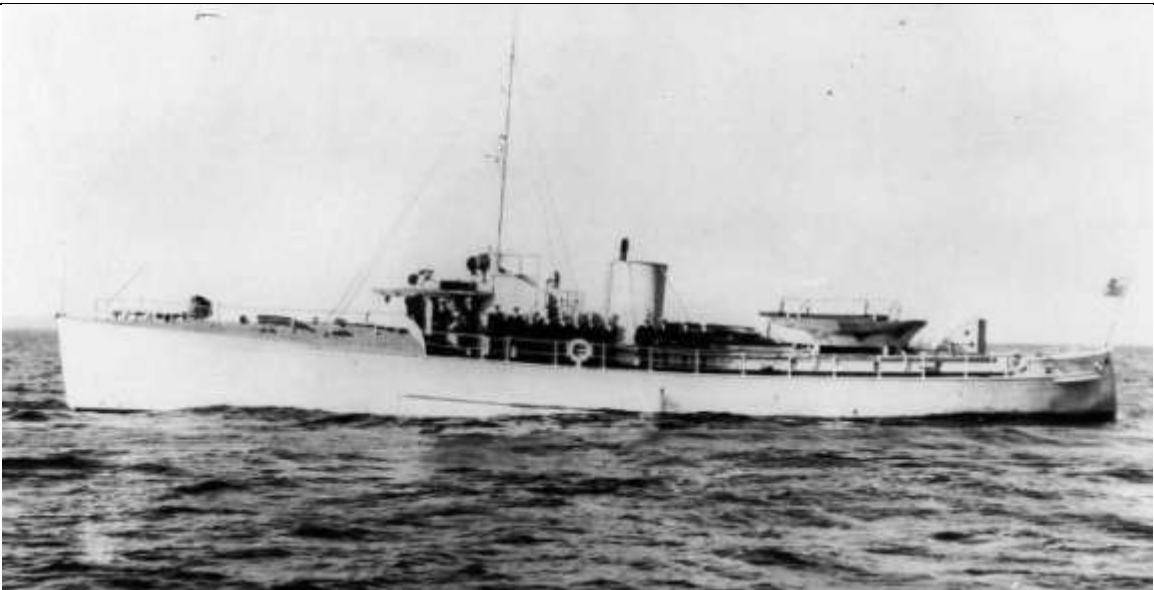
Royal Canadian Mounted Police 2300

RCMP FLEUR DE LIS



Royal Canadian Mounted Police 5719

RCMP MACDONALD



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP ALACHASSE



Royal Canadian Mounted Police 1150

RCMP ADVERSUS



Royal Canadian Mounted Police 501

RCMP MADAWASKA



Royal Canadian Mounted Police 162-4

This is RCMP ACADIAN and one can see the naval type uniform.

KENKERRY



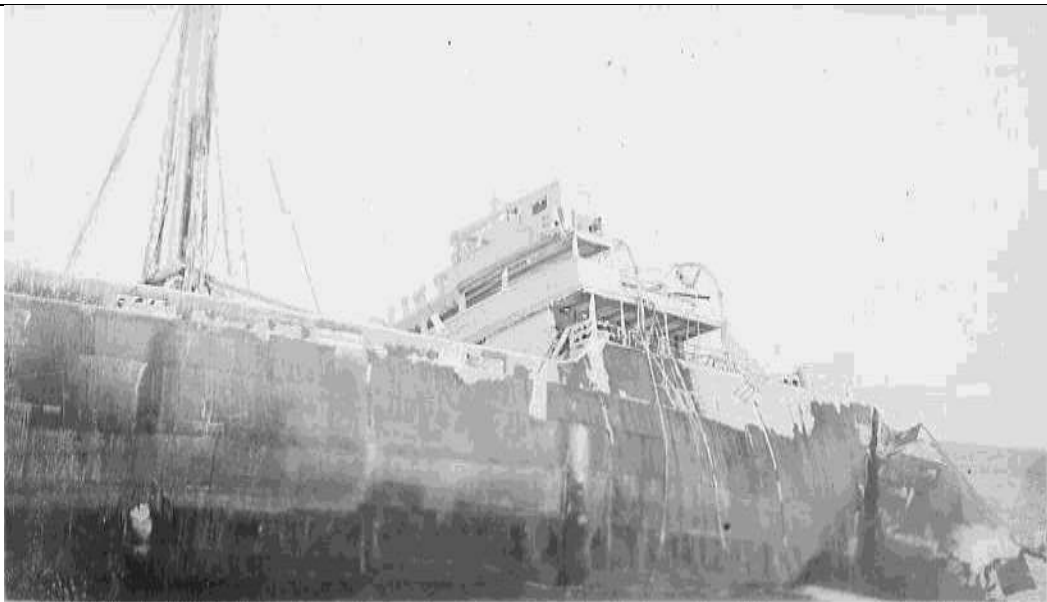
C. R. Spracklin

Wreck of the KENKERRY 1935



C. R. Spracklin

Wreck of the KENKERRY 1935



C. R. Spracklin

Wreck of the KENKERRY 1935



Albert Welcher

This is the presentation of Awards to those involved in the rescue of the KENKERRY crew. Left to right: Marg Martin (?), C. D. Howe, Gus Fleming, (woman unknown) Gordon B. Isnor, Dan Martin, Lou Fleming (Gus Fleming's brother), (3 unknown back row), Tom Welcher, (2 unknown back row), Albert Billard, Pat Fleming, and (the prominent person unknown).

In October 1934, Mr. A. W. Robertson, Cardiff, Wales, signed on the British six thousand ton freighter KENKERRY as her wireless operator. In those days wireless operators referred to their equipment as a fraction of a kilowatt in power. Therefore his station was to be a ¼ kilowatt Siemens Brothers Spark Station, with call sign GFYB. It contained only three frequencies that of 800, 705, and 600 meters – 375, 425, and 500 kilohertz respectively. This station also contained an emergency set, separate from the ship's source of power, known as a "Jury Set". This was Mr. Robertson's first trip to sea and according to him was going to be his last.

KENKERRY's Captain, Duncan Milne, was already a fourteen-month veteran of voyages with the KENKERRY. Shortly after wireless operator Robertson joined the ship they sailed to Greece, Egypt, and around the Mediterranean to Spain. They then went to Havana, Cuba, up to Newport News, Virginia, and back to Havana. From Havana they were to sail in ballast to Halifax and take on a load of wheat for Britain.

Four months after leaving Britain in October 1934, the KENKERRY was proceeding into Halifax on Thursday evening January 17th, 1935. A short time before she entered the approaches to the harbour, a severe blizzard set in reducing the visibility to one hundred yards. Because of the vessels reduced speed, being in ballast, and from the severe snowstorm, she became stranded on Black Rock Point, close to the village of Portuguese Cove.

Within minutes of striking Black Rock the KENKERRY's engine room flooded to the point there was no electricity to run the wireless station. Robertson had to send SOS on his Jury Set that was received by C.R. "Sprack" Spracklin at Chebucto VAV. Because of all the static created from this storm, Sprack was unable to determine the sense of Robertson's signal. He did manage to obtain a bearing, but in obtaining the sense you determine from which direction the signal is coming, either the actual bearing or the reciprocal of this

bearing. This, plus the storm, delayed reaching the vessel. Searchers scoured the coast as far as Sambro. Mr. Hildred Purcell in company with Everett Purcell, from Portuguese Cove, found the vessel. The storm was so severe that it took a horse and sleigh with a Halifax Herald news reporter, three and one-half hours to reach the scene.

The late Charlie Williams (an operator at Chebucto VAV) and Sprack went down to the wreck. Sprack was sure, as sure could be, that they were in for a good dressing down for not being able to do a better job with the radio bearing. This was not to be, and in appreciation for the service they provided they were given a bottle. When Charlie and Sprack arrived on the scene, the crew was trying to place a line ashore from the bow of the vessel with no visible success. Charlie managed to inform the twenty-nine men on the vessel, using Morse code with a flashlight, to send the line from the bridge and not the bow. This was then accomplished, but there was no steam for the winches. The crew on the vessel by this time was so cold that they could not pull this line taut. Second Officer Stanley Davis was the first to attempt to get ashore with the line for the Breeches Buoy. The line was so slack that when he made this attempt, he became buried in the record high sea that prevented the use of boats and had to be pulled back on board by the crew on KENKERRY. Patrick O'Day, an experienced seaman on KENKERRY, was the next to attempt the arduous crossing to land. He managed to pull himself hand over hand through the seas until those ashore could grab him, and then pass him from man to man up on to dry land. The line was then made fast for the Breeches Buoy. The second and third ones ashore were the two youngest crewmembers aboard, two fifteen-year old boy apprentices, William Dumble from Plymouth, England, and Jim Keornan from Dublin, Ireland.



A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is Bert Hawling's dog Cleo guarding his torch that is known as a flashlight in our world. These flashlights were very popular back then and were definitely the first "walkie talkies". One can see the key on the top of the light for transmitting Morse code. This is probably the type of flashlight Charlie Williams was using on this night.

The Captain, Duncan Milne, and the Chief Engineer, J. Dove, decided to remain on board the wreck until daylight although no one knows exactly why. Possibly the Captain felt a tug or some boat from Halifax would be able to reach the wreck, but they were prevented from even finding it because of the storm. The next morning at dawn the Chief Engineer came ashore leaving the Captain to depart, as we are told tradition dictates, as the last one off. When you are the last one off such an arrangement as the Breeches Buoy, you have to cut the line holding the buoy to the ship then pull yourself over. The Captain did this but never made it to shore. Many of those present felt he did not try as hard as he could have, but this was during the great depression when a Captain's berth was nearly impossible to find. Many Captains were

sailing as plain seamen in ships, and those Captains felt they were fortunate to have a job. Captain Milne's body was never recovered, and his was the only life lost.

Pieces of KENKERRY were to be seen where she struck on Black Rock Point for many years after this disaster. I was unable to locate Mr. Robertson so can add no further detail on the communications involved during this incident.

REOPENING CAMPERDOWN VCS

When the Chebucto Direction Finding Station VAV was constructed in 1917 during the war the buildings were of a temporary nature. Shortly after the Camperdown VCS station closed and this service was moved over to Chebucto as a combined coast and direction finding station, it became apparent that the buildings were reaching the end of their useful life and would need replacing. Various tests were made on both these sites which proved that not only were some of the buildings on the old Camperdown site in better condition, but that site was a better direction finding site than the Chebucto Head location. A new radio operation building was constructed in 1934 on the old Camperdown site.

The original Marconi station contained two houses, one for the officer in charge and his family, and the other was a double house capable of housing two of the operators and their families. These two homes had been built facing a north south direction, but their foundations had been constructed with poor quality concrete and with very poor drainage. New foundations were constructed with good drainage and the houses were moved on to these, facing an east-west direction. Actually these two homes had been built by a government subsidy, in 1912, for the Marconi Company.

On July 30th, 1935, the VAV call sign became redundant and the old VCS call went back on the air from the original site. This new station provided the coast and direction finding services that had been provided at Chebucto VAV. The new radio operations building was a typical installation of that era and living accommodation was provided on the upper story of the two-story building for any single operators on the staff.

Some of the equipment was moved from the Chebucto site over to the Camperdown site. The landline telegraph was a minor change and the old "CD" call returned to its original home. The British Admiralty RR Regenerative Receiver was moved over but soon replaced with another regenerative receiver and later with a Marconi MST Receiver. The Marconi 4KVA Transmitter that had been in use at Chebucto was moved over, and a Marconi 100-watt emergency transmitter was provided as a backup. This emergency transmitter never worked the best but was somewhat better than nothing. The British Marconi Direction Finder at Chebucto was up-graded with newer equipment. This newer equipment contained a tube, believed to be a V24, which required a lot of voltage to operate. This unit was converted, removing this tube, and was moved over to the new station containing peanut tubes.

The Signal Station moved back to Camperdown and into the old Duke of Kent's Signal Station that was now nearly a century and a half old. The three signalmen, John E. Spears, John Wilkie, and Dan Martin were not long in setting up the service back on its home ground.

The late Thomas E. Appleton states in his book "Usque Ad Mare" a history of the Canadian Coast Guard and Marine Services on page 86 that Mr. O. G. V. Spain was the commander of the Canadian Marine Service. He was in charge of the licensing of Canadian Coast Stations. I had found some reports signed by Mr. Spain that prove this statement to be correct.

In Appendix K of Canadian Warship Names by David J. Freeman he states that Camperdown was established on August 19th, 1914. I have been trying to understand this date because both Mr. Bridger and Mr. Spracklin stated that the Army was in charge at Camperdown during World War I and the Navy in charge during World War II. I now believe Mr. Bridger and Mr. Spracklin meant the visual Signal Station because the Camperdown Marconi wireless station remained with the Marconi organization from 1904 until 1926.

The following is what I had written over twenty years before the publication of Canadian Warship Names. I found this information in an old brief history of the Camperdown radio station. "Since 1915, when the Canadian Government had taken over these Canadian Coast Stations, they had been operated by the Department of Naval Service." I do not agree with that statement because the naval service did not operate this station. This station was operated by civilian employees of the Canadian Marconi Company under licence with the Canadian government. I would agree that the licencing of these stations had been changed from the Canadian Marine Service to the Department of Naval Service. I continued on to say that in 1922 this changed to the Department of Marine and Fisheries. 1936 was to see another change. On November 2nd, 1936, the proclamation of the Department of Transport Act was made. This meant that as far as federal jurisdiction was concerned, all agencies of transportation within the country came under this new department meaning all these coast stations were now owned and operated by the Department of Transport. Other than the new title nothing was altered within these stations and they continued as before.

This World War I description of this station gets more confusing when one reads the description of Charles Peter Edwards recorded by Thomas E. Appleton at the bottom of Page 86 in *Usque Ad Mare*. He states that Mr. Edwards with the Wireless Telegraphy Branch transferred to the Department of Naval Service in 1910 and he held naval rank. Mr. Appleton goes on to state that telecommunications became the responsibility of the Air Services Branch of the Department of Transport in 1936 and its head was Lieutenant Commander C. P. Edwards.

It is unlikely that we will ever learn the exact detail that took place although I believe the operation was Marconi and the licencing was with the Department of Naval Service during World War I. I would like to record here that all the former operators I interviewed years ago that knew Mr. C. P. Edwards had no use for the man. He apparently would do anything to elevate himself another notch up the bureaucratic ladder.

In 1938 the aerials at Camperdown station were badly damaged by freezing rain. The Head Rigger for the Department of Transport at this time was the late Robert Lake. Bob was quite a character and always ready for a practical joke. In 1938 he was doing an overhaul of the aerials at VCS when the Chief Engineer at Headquarters, a Mr. Robinson, came around to see how he was making out. It was not long before a difference of opinion resulted with Lake up the mast and Robinson below. All of a sudden the paint bucket came down all over Robinson, accidentally of course.



C. R. Spracklin

The house on the left is for the Officer in Charge, the operators housing is the double house on the right, Camperdown, Nova Scotia, looking northeast.



C. R. Spracklin

The Chebucto Head Lighthouse is in the distance as seen from the Signal Tower Platform at Camperdown, Nova Scotia. Jack Brooman's house on left front and Jack married Agnes Gallagher. The Portuguese Cove School House is in the centre foreground.



C. R. Spracklin

This is the Radio Station and the Signal Station Camperdown one year after this, the second radio station opened in 1935.



C. R. Spracklin

This is Portuguese Cove as seen from Camperdown Hill.



C. R. Spracklin

This is looking north towards Halifax from Camperdown.



W. H. Wooding

This is the Operations Building Camperdown Radio VCS 1938 and Lawrence Martin's house and barn are down in back.



Walter Wooding

This is Charlie Williams at the operating position Camperdown Radio VCS 1938.



C. R. Spracklin

This is the operating position at Camperdown Radio VCS from 1935 until 1939.



W. H. Wooding

This is the Camperdown Radio VCS Operations Building in 1938.



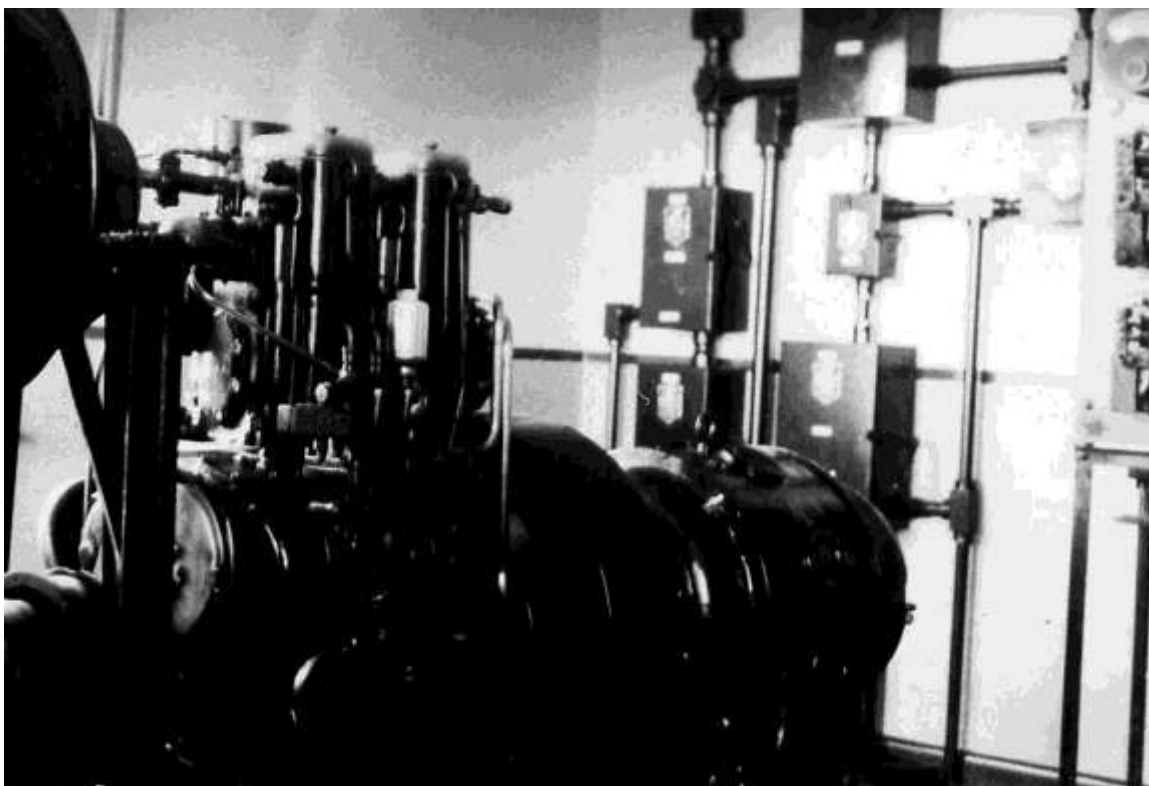
W. H. Wooding

This is Bill Baker operating Camperdown Radio VCS in 1938.



W. H. Wooding

This is the operating position at Camperdown Radio VCS on June 28th, 1938.



Walter Wooding VE3WW ex VE1ET

This is the Camperdown Emergency Generator in 1938.



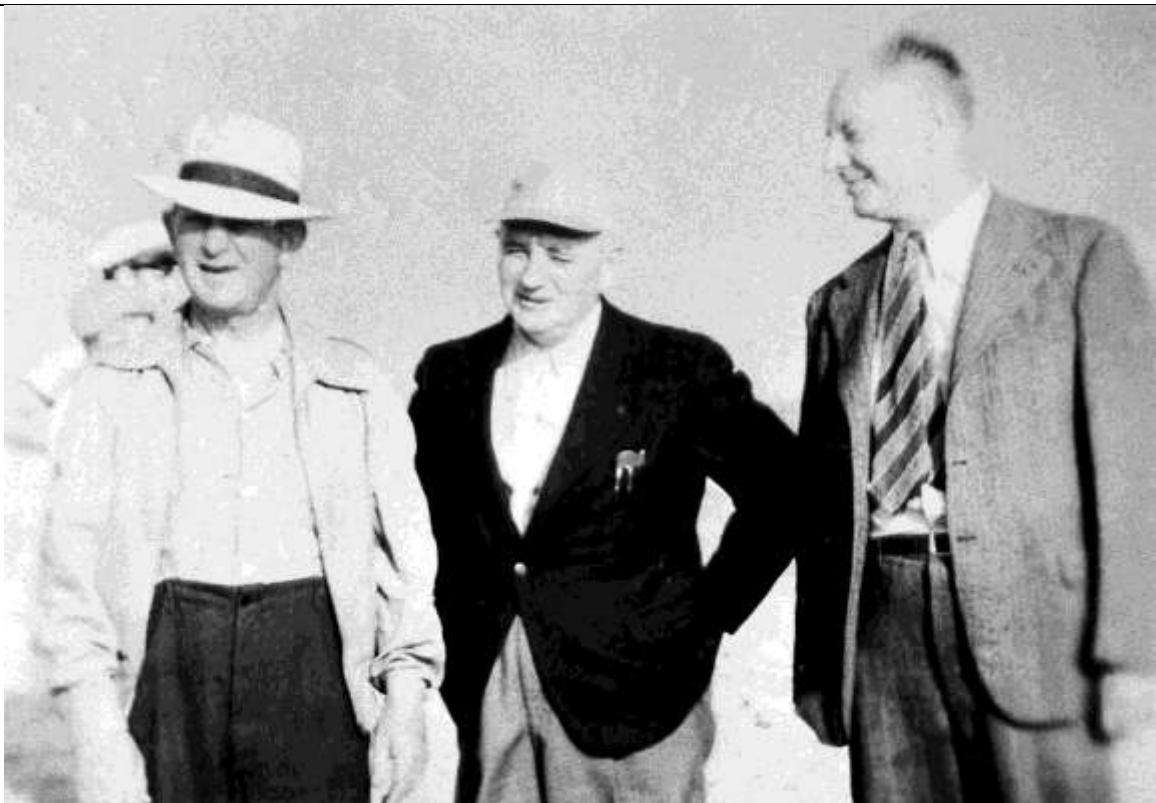
W. H. Wooding VE3WW ex VE1ET

This is an ice storm at Camperdown Radio VCS in 1938. I was told the car is a 1937 Chevrolet.



W. H. Wooding

These are the repairs under way to the antenna after the ice storm, Camperdown Radio VCS in 1938.



H. H. Brennan

From the left to the right this is Bob Lake, Harris Brennan and Eric Ward on Sable Island in 1952.



Pat Falvey

This is Pat Falvey operating Camperdown Radio VCS in 1943.

The road from Halifax out through the villages and past these stations was not paved until the mid 1950's. Prior to this many a traveler became stuck axle deep in the bottomless potholes that developed, especially during the spring of the year. Many of these travelers had to cut brush from alongside the road to put under the driving wheels in order to get moving and on their way. Although the road is now paved it still is one of the most crooked roads a person could encounter. It reminds me of a poem written about the Alaska Highway:

The way this road winds in
The way this road winds out
Leaves my mind in serious doubt
As to whether the dude who built this route
Was going to hell or coming out

Dr. John Henderson of the National Research Council, Ottawa, set up an experimental Cathode Ray Direction Finding system at Camperdown in 1938. It was here that the first experimentation took place on this type of Direction Finder. The C.R.T. D/F, as it was known, was an old personal friend of mine. I was the operator of one of these DF's at Coverdale, New Brunswick, with call sign CKT from 1958 to 1960. After World War II, the man in charge of this work was Dr. Mackenzie, his engineer was Bill Haney (who had worked with the inventor of radar), and Bert Lindsay was the technician. The Adcock Antenna Array did not work very well because of all the local interference from metal objects nearby. Having had experience on one of these arrangements I can understand this well. These antennae were quite susceptible to this interference. Once this was eliminated they were quite accurate. This of course involved a large clear field that was impossible at Camperdown because of all the other radio services being conducted.



Public Archives of Canada PA-142540

This is a female member of the Royal Canadian Navy known as a “Wren” operating the C.R.T. D/F at Coverdale in August 1945. This is the same equipment we operated in 1959. The speaker at her right wrist is the intercom with the operations room a mile or more from the site and was still in use when I was there. The three vertical units to her left are the receivers. Each of the three receivers covered a different portion of the high frequency radio spectrum. These three were known as unit or band C, B, and A from left to right in this photograph. The operator in this photograph has her left hand on the tuning knob of band A. If you would like more technical detail and a good description of this station visit Jerry Proc’s site titled [HMCS COVERDALE](#) you can reach via [Google](#).

Four years and two months after this new Camperdown station opened, war was again declared. This new war, World War II, has been called the Electronic War because this type of equipment was used so extensively. Camperdown was to see many changes, to begin with, two operators were assigned to each of the three shifts, day, evening, and night. All routine communications and broadcasts were terminated. The sole purpose of these operators was to maintain a listening watch for distress signals and take a bearing of these signals when heard. They were to answer these distress calls and relay any requests for assistance. The operation of all of these Canadian Department of Transport stations remained one should say, with Mr. C. D. Howe, who was the first and then Minister of the Department of Transport. Mr. Howe must have felt the operation of these stations his personal job because he took these throughout the various government departments. This radio section (of the Department of Transport) was on termination of the war, under the Department of Munitions and Supply with Mr. Howe as Minister. But it all did not matter in the overall operation because it all came under the direction of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Dan Martin had left the visual Signal Station staff in 1937, leaving John Spears and John Wilkie to run the station alone. J.G. "Gerry" Spears a son of John Spears took over the job of relieving his father and John Wilkie for their annual holidays. Before World War II was actually declared, the Navy took over the Signal Station on August 10th, 1939. Gerry Spears was relieving signalman and worked until his last shift on September 14th. Then he went to Halifax and enlisted in the Navy on September 15th. John Wilkie enlisted in the Navy also and returned to Camperdown as a Signalman. John Spears went to enlist but was rejected, because he was colour-blind. John was not only a trained signalman but had been doing an excellent job of reading the multi-coloured signal hoists for twelve years. This eye defect was considered serious enough that the Navy felt he would not be able to help them even though they were short staffed.

Naval Signalmen took over the Signal Station on September 15th, 1939, and renamed the station the Port War Signal Station. The old Duke of Kent's Signal Station was demolished on the completion of a new modern signal building. I can only hope that not only was this old building demolished with dignity, somewhere along the line someone paused to reflect on the history that was being smashed with each blow of the wrecking hammers. John Spears returned to the Department of Transport. As one former signal staff member put it "went over to read the newspaper with Sprack and the boys or whatever they did at the wireless station".

One of these naval members stationed at this Port War Signal Station during the war was Chief Petty Officer Ted Isnor, a master mechanic. Ted became a big favourite among the local residents of the area and spent much of his off-duty time wandering around the nearby beaches. He collected numerous items in this area from various ships that had sunk or run aground. Gerry Spears was not sent back to his old position as Signalman at Camperdown. He entered the Navy as a Signalman but was later transferred to the new and important Radar Branch of the Navy.

The Navy set up a guard around the Camperdown station during the war that meant that no one without permission was to go near the place. Mr. Lawrence Martin occupied the house down on the south side, from the station. Lawrence had a collie dog that divided her time between home and the wireless station. The operators at the station had a dish they kept clean and filled with water for her. She was a welcome pet, and of course received many meals at the station. Lawrence had the habit of making daily trips to the station for a chat with Sprack and the operators. He was also the Station's Janitor, which involved cleaning the floors on Saturday mornings. Unfortunately Lawrence had to be placed in the Nova Scotia Mental Hospital to end his days, but at the time of the war most referred to him as being a bit simple. He managed something many have tried and never succeeded. He beat the military at their own game. These guards around the station kept dragging poor old Lawrence (about seventy years of age at the time) in to the Officer in Charge for violating their rules. They had him up before this officer as many as ten times in one day. Finally these guards admitted defeat and went back to challenging shadows and stray dogs or whatever they did, and Lawrence went back to his normal routine – going up the hill to the wireless station for a visit.

THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

The only threat created to anyone or anything by the Royal Canadian Navy between the two world wars was to the pocketbook of the Canadian taxpayer. For this reason our government reverted to relying on the protection of the Royal Navy and decreased the size of the Royal Canadian Navy as far as possible.

After World War I, HMCS NIOBE and HMCS RAINBOW had seen their useful service and were decommissioned. These two were replaced with another British Light Cruiser, HMCS AURORA, whose Canadian wireless call sign I was unable to locate. AURORA served the Royal Canadian Navy from 1920 until 1922, and was replaced by two "P" Class Destroyers, HMCS PATRICIAN with call sign GCPA and HMCS PATRIOT with call sign GCSO. The List of Radio Station Call Sign Blocks for 1923 states that Canada held the blocks of call signs from GTPA to GTSZ and from GTVA to GTZZ, but there is definitely an error somewhere in this area.

John F. "Ginger" Taylor retired from the Royal Canadian Navy with the rank of Lieutenant Commander and states:

"I served in the PATRICIAN from my birthday 17 March 1925 as a Telegraphist. I was promoted to Tel the same day. Her call sign was definitely GCPA I will never forget it, it flows so smoothly from a key. Her naval call was MX. Possibly the reason their call signs are not from the block allocated Canada is that they may have retained their English ones, only a guess but possible. The minesweeper THIEPVAL was CFP. I was a Ldg. Tel. in her when we went aground up in Barclay Sound and lost her in 1930.

I regret that I have no photos of any of the gear in any of the ships (this was strictly forbidden). However the Destroyers had a lovely ½ KW spark set Type 4A with an emergency Mira Induction coil, range 2 to 3 miles. The spark xmtr had a freq range from about 450 to 800 metres (no Kc/s or MH/Z in those days). The power supply was from a rotary converter run off the ship's D.C. mains (100V). The Spark gap was run from a separate motor and we could adjust the speed and consequently the note. The Receiving gear had an emergency Xtal Detector and all sorts of large inductances in boxes with tap switches, large variable condensers in glass containers. The condensers were rated as being of so many "Jars" from the old "Leyden" jars. There was a 7 tube R/F amplifier of which we used usually only two or three tubes to conserve filament batteries. The Freq. range was from about 1500 Kc/s to 16 Kc/s. the gear was spread all over the bulkhead and took up about 4 by 4 ft. we used to read "GBR" Rugby on 16 Kc/s usually in Esquimalt. He made press several times daily.

When away and at anchor the ship's power was shut down at about 2200 and we used candles for light. I remember relieving a chap at 0400 and he said how quiet it had been for a long time. He had dozed off and the phone cord, which came from the deck head had swung back and forth over the candle until there was only a short length dangling from the headphones. No wonder it was quiet!

Sometime in either 1925 or 26 at the start of interest in short wave, we had an Royal Navy Petty Officer Telegraphist who was very interested and together we bought the parts to build a transmitter and receiver. The receiver was a very simple 2 R/F, Detector, and 1 Amp. We made plug in coils stripped a variable condenser to a couple of plates Etc. We had a lot of trouble with hand capacity and finally we rigged up a system of cotton reels as pulleys and cord so we could tune remotely. It was not pretty but worked so we had both hands free and didn't lose our station. The transmitter was also a simple self-excited one-tube affair. We made plug in coils Etc., used a wave meter in a ½ Lb., tobacco tin with a flashlight bulb, coil, and condenser. We calibrated it from known xmtr. Station freq's. I imagine we were away off freq., but there weren't too many on the air then. I will never forget the thrill when we made our first contact. I had made many calls without results and finally we got an answer from a U. S. Lighthouse tender the CEDAR with call sign WWDO. She was up the West Coast."

HMCS PATRIOT was decommissioned in 1927 and HMCS PATRICIAN followed the next year, 1928. By 1922 the officers and men of the Royal Canadian Navy numbered only 366. In 1928 the Navy acquired two more British destroyers, HMCS CHAMPLAIN that held call sign CGAK and HMCS VANCOUVER with call sign CGAV.

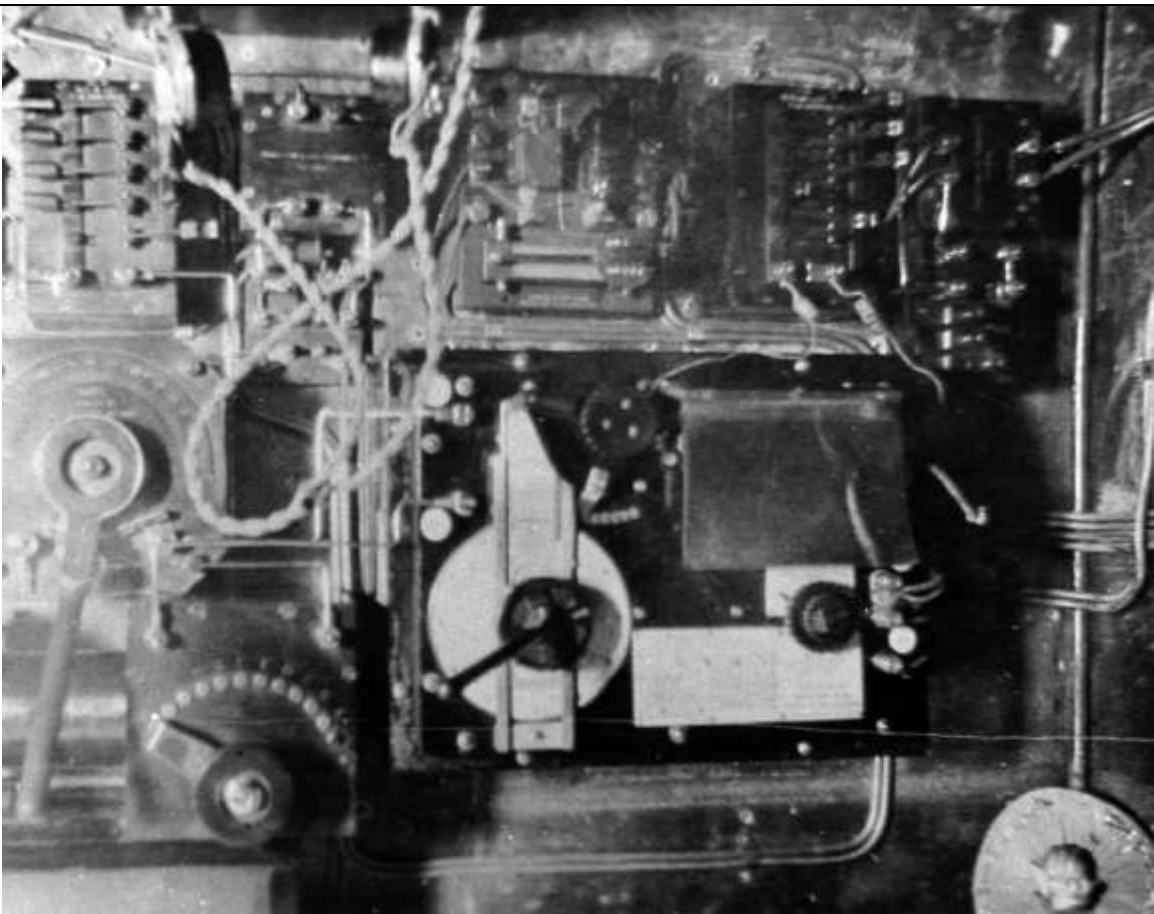
Frank Chambers retired from the Royal Canadian Navy as a Commissioned Warrant Officer, and states:

"In this snapshot (reproduced on these pages) you are looking at the receiving equipment in the W/T Office of the CHAMPLAIN, 1st world war destroyer that was acquired by the R.C.N. as replacement for the PATRIOT around 1928. Of course on this ship we had no H/F – Our W/T equipment (transmitters) consisted of a spark (rotary gap) M/F transmitter for commercial communications. (600 meters – 200 meters) and our L/F Poulson Arc Transmitters for naval communications around the 100 Kc/s frequency. Actually the Poulson Arc transmissions were the purest C/W note that one would ever hear in the earphones. The only problem was that if the ship was rolling and a strand of the aerial touched a steel wire stay the arc would "fluff" out and we had to re-start or strike the arc again. I don't know if you have ever had experience with an arc transmitter, but if not the arc was maintained in a vacuum type chamber, between two electrodes in a magnetic field, which field would "bow" out the arc (for what reason I never knew). Also the arc was burning in a methylated spirit, gaseous atmosphere (also for what reason I never knew), but the arc transmitters were very temperamental and the introduction of valve transmitters were really a Godsend.



Public Archives Canada PA-56571

This is HMCS CHAMPLAIN near Varennes, Quebec in 1932.



Frank Chambers

This is the W/T Office in HMCS CHAMPLAIN. Does anyone know if the photograph is right side up?

With regards to the snapshot – you will note that the tuning instruments, re, capacitors, fixed and variable, and inductances, fixed and variable, were external to the detector/amplifier unit. The tubes were on the outside of the unit and were of such brilliance that we could extinguish the office lighting. Also it was found that these receiving valves (pardon the use of the word valve, they were known by that classification in those days) emitted a ray of some type that was damaging to the eyes – hence a leather shield was added to cover the valves (tubes). This tuner unit was a detector and two stages of amplification and this receiving outfit could emit a signal that could be heard for many miles.

So much for our early communication equipment.

Of call signs I can't help you very much – all naval ships had two call signs – commercial four letter groups and naval call signs of two letter groups. It was very seldom that we resorted to commercial work – only to obtain bearings when entering foreign harbours and our navigating officers were distrustful of our charts or in fog. I suppose that Radar navigation has taken the place of even this in frequent use of commercial communications.

I was not in the Navy during the time that AURORA was in commission. I didn't join until 1924 and my first ship was the PATRIOT or time on the old minesweepers FESTUBERT or YPRES) and I can't remember any of those commercial or naval call signs now.

Time sort of dulls the memory and it is hard to drift back 50 – 60 years. About the only thing I never did forget, although I haven't had occasion to be exposed to it in 40 years is the Morse code. I gave up operating when I received my commission in 1943, but it still seems to be with me."

John F. "Ginger" Taylor continues:

"I also commissioned the VANCOUVER in 1928. She had the same spark set the PAT had and also a 5 K.W. Arc transmitter. We worked on about 111 Kc/s and used to work Esquimalt from Mexico during the middle watch if atmos were not too bad."

"Ginger" Taylor related some interesting detail on the earliest tubes, which is worth recording. He states: "I always remember in the Royal Navy noticing that the tubes in a short wave xmtr. were mounted at about a 30 degree angle and wondered why. These were silica envelope tubes which they used to cut open and replace the filament when needed, the elements were held in place by rods held in sleeves which were a fairly loose fit. As a ship rolled so the elements moved and altered the inter-electrode capacity with drastic results. They hoped she wouldn't roll so far as to allow this to happen."

The Royal Canadian Navy had two new destroyers built for them in the United Kingdom. These two, HMCS SKEENA with call sign CGAL and HMCS SAGUENAY with call sign CGAB, joined HMCS CHAMPLAIN and HMCS VANCOUVER in 1931. VANCOUVER and CHAMPLAIN were to terminate their service in 1936 along with four minesweepers that had been in service since 1922. I was unable to locate any radio detail on these four but found three other naval craft equipped with wireless. HMCS FESTUBERT with call sign CGAF was classed a training ship during this period. She also served as a Gate Vessel from 1939 until 1943. HMCS THIEPVAL with call sign CFP served from 1922 until 1930. HMCS YPRES with call sign CGAY served as a training ship for a ten-year period from 1922 until 1932. She also became a Gate Vessel from 1939 until run down and sunk on May 12th, 1940 with no loss of life.

The Royal Canadian Navy acquired two more destroyers in 1938. HMCS OTTAWA with call sign CGBQ and HMCS RESTIGOUCHE with call sign CGBR. Note the change in the call signs from a CGA to a CGB prefix. All the naval ship's call signs were changed at this time, possibly to confuse the enemy. Whose enemy theirs or ours? Four minesweepers and a training ship were built in Canada and added to this fleet.

At the outbreak of World War II the Royal Canadian Navy entered the war with 145 officers, 1,674 men, and the following fleet:

Destroyers:

CGBM FRASER
CGBQ OTTAWA
CGBR RESTIGOUCHE
CGBD SAGUENAY
CGBJ ST. LAURENT
CGBK SKEENA

Minesweepers:

CGBW COMOX
CGBS FUNDY
CGBT GASPE
CGBV NANOOSE

Training Vessels:

CGBP VENTURE (sailing vessel)
CGBN YPRES

HMCS VENTURE was the last tern schooner built in Canada. Actually she was not a true tern her hull was a copy of the original BLUENOSE with three masts instead of two. She was built at Meteghan River, Nova Scotia, in 1936 and was commissioned in 1937. She was fitted with an FR12 high frequency radiotelegraph/radiotelephone transmitter/receiver at one time that had a power input of 15 watts.

These twelve ships that entered this war had been in the habit of using the services of the regular Department of Transport stations. In March 1940 the Navy took over the Marconi Station, civilian staff and all, at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. This was the remnant of the original Marconi station that opened in 1902 in place of a station at St. John's, Newfoundland. By 1940 this station at Glace Bay was the most powerful in eastern Canada. Mr. Robert Foreman was Manager of this station at the outbreak of the war and remained in charge throughout the war. The operators at this station did not know the contents of the increasing number of coded messages they were delivering to these ships.

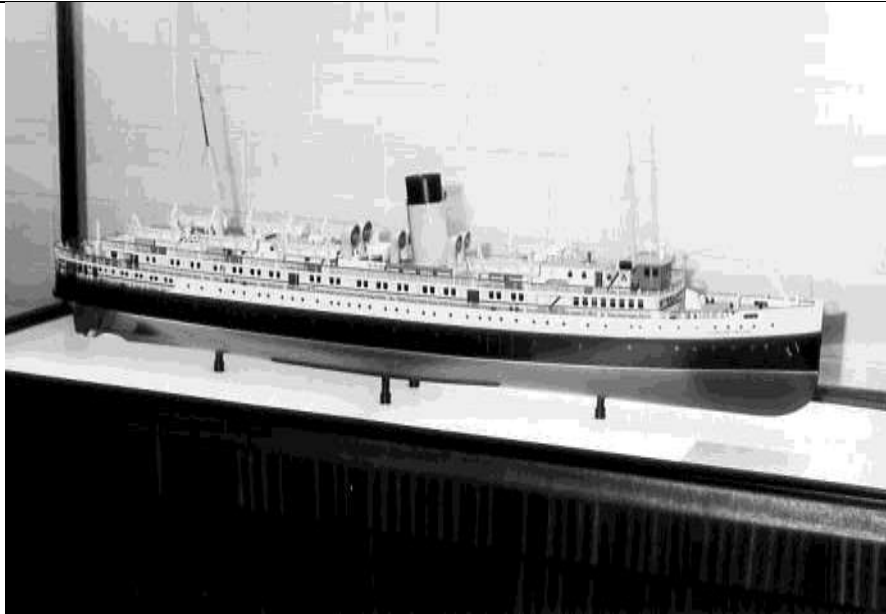


A. K. Smith

This is R. E. "Bob" Foreman in the door to the radio station in 1924.

Steps were taken immediately to increase the fleets of the Royal Canadian Navy and our merchant Navy. At the outbreak of war RCMP CAPTOR (call sign CGPY) was based at Saint John, New Brunswick. Both she and her commanding officer, R. C. Butt, found themselves members of the Royal Canadian Navy. Someone had reported seeing a U-boat on the surface off Digby Neck, Nova Scotia. This would put it much too close for comfort of the PRINCESS HELENE (call sign VGKL), the ferry that ran daily between Saint John and Digby. On learning of this U-boat the Navy assigned CAPTOR to travel in zig-zag fashion back and forth with PRINCESS HELENE. CAPTOR could only make half the speed that PRINCESS HELENE could and had one old machine gun only. When Captain Butt asked what he was supposed to do if they encountered this U-boat, his superior told him that was his problem his job was to see that he followed the ferry. Luckily no harm fell to either vessel. When trouble was suspected, the ferry "opened up" and ran like hell for port. CAPTOR came "puffing" in behind, taking twice as long as the ferry to get there. But this is only one of many such incidents and gives a good example of just how poorly equipped we were when we

got tangled up in this war. The one thing that should be noted is that we declared war on our own, not as a branch of the British forces as we had in World War I.



R. J. "Dick" Roscoe

This is a model of SS PRINCESS HELENE on display at the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa, Ontario

CORVETTES

Our shipyards went to work immediately to increase the size of our fleets. The design of these ships was kept as simple as possible, in order to assist mass production. Some very amazing facts were to be proven from this mass production. The first products from these "ship assembly lines" were to report to the Navy as our famous Corvettes. By the time the war ended we had produced many of these famous ships and had kept 123 for our own use. The majority of these ships were named after various towns throughout the country. This gave the "folks back home" some contact with the actual fleet. These vessels were assigned four letter international call signs with a CG, CY, and CZ prefix but were not listed with the International Telecommunication Union. These vessels all carried several radio operators who communicated continuously via radiotelegraph. Some of these operators were former landline telegraph operators and others former amateur radio operators, but the bulk of them were the product of Ed Hartling and his fellow instructors.

The one hundred twenty-three Corvettes were as follow, with their call sign and years of service:

CGQW	1941-1945	AGASSIZ
CGNB	1941-1944	ALBERNI
CGQT	1941-1945	ALGOMA
CGTR	1941-1945	AMHERST
CGTT	1944-1946	ARNPRIOR
GPTY	1940-1945	ARROWHEAD
CGQF	1940-1945	ARVIDA
CGKK	1943-1945	ATHOLL
CGDC	1944-1945	ASBESTOS
CGTP	1941-1945	BADDECK
CGTF	1941-1944	BARRIE
CGVP	1941-1945	BATTLEFORD

CGBB	1944-1945	BEAUHARNOIS
CYVJ	1944-1945	BELLEVILLE
GPXD	1940-1945	BITTERSWEET
CGTG	1944-1945	BOWMANVILLE
CGTS	1941-1945	BRANDON
CGZS	1942-1945	BRANTFORD
CGTQ	1941-1945	BUCTOUCHE
CYQT	1941-1945	CALGARY
CGTZ	1941-1945	CAMROSE
CGQK	1940-1945	CHAMBLY
CYRF	1941-1942	CHARLOTTETOWN
CGVB	1941-1944	CHICOUTIMI
CGQX	1941-1945	CHILLIWACK
CGQR	1940-1945	COBALT
CYVP	1944-1945	COBOURG
CGQM	1940-1945	COLLINGWOOD
CGTC	1944-1945	COPPER CLIFF
CGND	1941-1945	DAUPHIN
CGVD	1941-1945	DAWSON
CGVQ	1941-1945	DRUMHELLER
CGZY	1942-1945	DUNDAS
CGTX	1941-1945	DUNVEGAN
CGNF	1941-1945	EDMUNDSTON
GPXZ	1940-1945	EYEBRIGHT
----	1940-1945	FENNEL
CZGG	1944-1945	FERGUS
CZGJ	1943-1944	FOREST HILL
CYQV	1941-1945	FREDERICTON
CYVF	1943-1945	FRONTENAC
CGNW	1943-1945	GIFFARD
CZGZ	1944-1945	GUELPH
CYQG	1941-1945	HALIFAX
CGYC	1944-1945	HAWKESBURY
----	1940-1945	HEPATICA
CGNX	1944-1945	HESPELER
CGVC	1944-1945	HUMBERSTONE
CGWC	1944-1945	HUNTSVILLE
CGQY	1941-1945	KAMLOOPS
CGVW	1941-1945	KAMSACK
CGQS	1941-1945	KENOGAMI
CGNY	1944-1945	KINCARDINE
CYRB	1942-1945	KITCHENER
CYQK	1944-1945	LACHUTE
CYQX	1942-1945	LA MALBAIE
CGQQ	1944-1945	LEASIDE
CGVJ	1941-1945	LETHBRIDGE
CGNT	1940-1941	LEVIS
CYVB	1943-1945	LINDSAY
CZGK	1944-1945	LONGBRANCH
CGTM	1941-1943	LOUISBURG
CGTM	1943-1945	LOUISBURG the new LOUISBURG kept the old ones call sign but not her pendant number.
CGTV	1941-1945	LUNENBURG
CGQD	1940-1945	MATAPEDIA
GKLV	1940-1945	MAYFLOWER
CZJM	1944-1945	MERRITTONIA

CGZT	1941-1945	MIDLAND
CYZX	1944-1945	MIMICO
CGTK	1942-1945	MONCTON
CGVN	1941-1945	MOOSE JAW
CGVT	1941-1945	MORDEN
CGLZ	1941-1945	NANAIMO
CGQL	1940-1945	NAPANEE
CGZX	1942-1945	NEW WESTMINSTER
CGYY	1943-1945	NORSYD
CYTW	1943-1945	NORTH BAY
CGVX	1941-1945	OAKVILLE
CGNZ	1944-1945	ORANGEVILLE
CGQN	1940-1945	ORILLIA
CYTX	1943-1945	OWEN SOUND
CYVD	1944-1945	PARRY SOUND
CYVG	1944-1945	PETERBOROUGH
CGWW	1944-1945	PETROLIA
CGTN	1941-1945	PICTOU
CYRG	1942-1945	PORT ARTHUR
CGVK	1941-1945	PRESCOTT
CGQZ	1941-1945	QUESNEL
CGQP	1941-1945	RIMOUSKI
CGDD	1943-1945	RIVIERE DU LOUP
CYQW	1942-1944	REGINA
CGVS	1941-1945	ROSTHERN
CGTJ	1941	SACKVILLE (now museum Halifax, NS)
CGVF	1941-1945	SASKATOON
CYVR	1944-1945	ST. LAMBERT
CZGL	1944-1945	ST. THOMAS
CGTD	1941-1944	SHAWINIGAN
CGQB	1941-1945	SHEDIAC



Public Archives Canada PA-114380

This is HMCS SHEDIAC off the coast of British Columbia on December 16th, 1944.

CGTW	1941-1945	SHERBROOKE
----	1940-1942	SPIKENARD
CYVK	1944-1945	SMITHS FALLS
GQCJ	1940-1945	SNOWBERRY
CGTY	1941-1945	SOREL
CZJN	1944-1945	STELLARATON
CZJP	1944-1945	STRATHROY
CGVL	1941-1945	SUDBURY
CGTL	1941-1945	SUMMERSIDE
CGVR	1941-1945	THE PAS
CGNV	1944-1945	THORLOCK
CGVG	1944-1945	TILLSONBURG
CGZV	1942-1945	TIMMINS
CGVZ	1941-1945	TRAIL
CGDG	1943-1945	TRENTONIAN
GQDG	1940-1945	TRILLIUM
CGZW	1942-1945	VANCOUVER
CYRD	1942-1945	VILLE DE QUEBEC
CGDL	1944-1945	WESTYORK
CGQW	1940-1945	WETASKIWIN
CGVY	1941-1943	WEYBURN
CYVQ	1944-1945	WHITBY
----	1940-1941	WINDFLOWER
CYQZ	1942-1946	WOODSTOCK

One must admit quite a feat for a country that had constructed only a warship as large as a minesweeper.

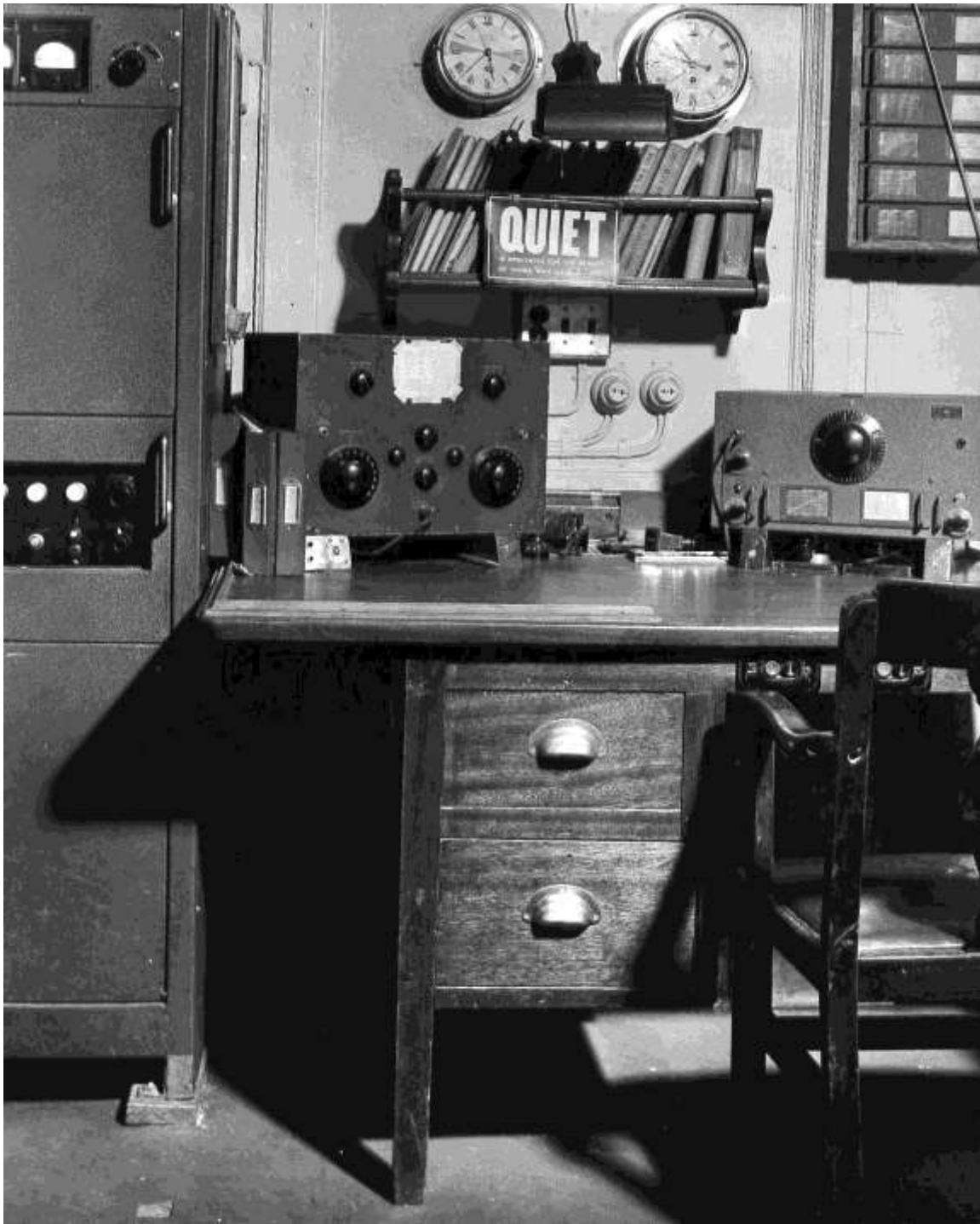
Canadian Warship Names states some were commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy at a later date. These are the ones with the British call signs and in the blue. I believe they did not commission into the Royal Canadian Navy far enough to receive a call sign. At least from all my research I am convinced they remained HMS and not HMCS, but the first of these were the fourteen to enter service in the closing months of 1940. I have been unable to locate a call sign for FENNEL and HEPATICA, and I have not found call signs before SPIKENARD and WINDFLOWER were lost.

THE CPR LUXURY LINERS

The Navy acquired three large merchant ships at the outbreak of the war. They were small luxury liners of 6,000 tons, 385 feet in length with a maximum speed of 22 knots each, built and operated for the Canadian Pacific Company.

VGFW	PRINCE DAVID
VGfZ	PRINCE HENRY
VGJC	PRINCE ROBERT

The call signs listed here are their pre war civil call signs and all three ships retained these same call signs when they became naval vessels. All three were converted to Armed Merchant Cruisers commencing right after the outbreak of the war and were ready for service in 1940. In 1943 they were converted again. PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY became landing ships (Infantry), and PRINCE ROBERT an Anti-Aircraft Ship. By the end of the war PRINCE ROBERT had become the most widely traveled ship within the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet.



Public Archives Canada E-3495

This is the main radio station in HMCS PRINCE ROBERT in July 1942. There is a Marconi MSL-5 Receiver on the left and a National HR50T Receiver on the right. The rack above the HR50T holds the coils for the various frequency bands for this receiver.



Public Archives Canada E-3494

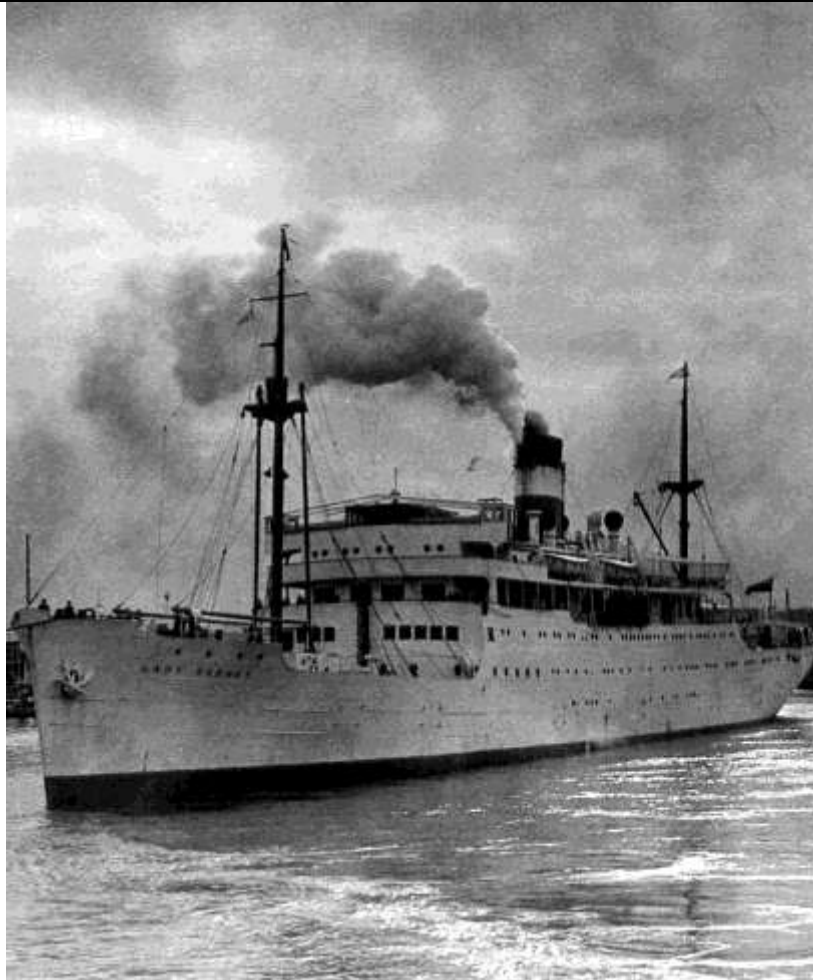
This is a better view of the HR50T Receiver and the Coil Rack.

THE CNS PASSENGER LINERS

Canadian National Steamships (CNS) operated 11 ships at the outbreak of this war. There were five passenger liners. Three of these were built and entered service in 1928, registered in Halifax as General Cargo vessels. Two more entered service the following year and were registered in Montreal as

Refrigerated Cargo vessels (Banana carriers), and all five were built by Cammell Laird and Company, Shipbuilders and Engineers, Birkenhead, England. They were twin-screw (two propellers), 420 feet long, 8,000 tons, and capable of maintaining a speed of 14 knots. The five were:

VGZN LADY NELSON
VGZP LADY HAWKINS
VGZQ LADY DRAKE
VGZR LADY RODNEY
VGZS LADY SOMERS



Public Archives Canada PA-56811

SS LADY RODNEY

The last two were the two Montreal ships. Apparently the three dashes of the letter O in Morse code were considered too long for the suffix of one of these call signs, but this is as ridiculous as assigning these calls in alphabetical order. Along with six sister ships, refrigerated freighters capable of carrying twelve passengers, they operated in a trade between eastern Canada and the islands of the West Indies. Because of this route they were well known in this area and many of the crew were native to Nova Scotia or made their homes here.

Three of these five passenger ships were lost during the war. LADY SOMERS was the first of these. She had been converted to an Armed Merchant Cruiser for the Royal Navy. While under the command of Commander G. L. Dunbar, R.D., R.N.R., with a crew of 175 men she was torpedoed and sunk on July 15th,

1941, in the North Atlantic. 138 survivors were rescued by Spanish ships and delivered to a neutral port. The rest of her crew was later reported safe and no one lost his life from this incident.

January 1942 saw the LADY HAWKINS depart Halifax for a run she had made many times. Her Master was Captain H. O. Giffen and her Chief Officer (Mate) was Percy A. Kelly. Her three Radio Officers were Lawrence Callahan, Fred Slaven, and Robert Clayton. They worked for the Canadian Marconi Company. C.N.S. paid a war bonus only. LADY HAWKINS' station was Marconi, as were all the radio stations in the C.N.S. fleet. The main transmitter in the "Lady Boats" was a huge thing of 500 watts. This contained a door in order for the operators to enter the transmitter for routine maintenance. These tube transmitters were capable of either continuous wave (CW) or modulated continuous wave (MCW) transmissions. The wave change switch (changed the output from one frequency to another) was mounted on a shaft one inch in diameter and about two feet long. Lawrence, who was married and made his home in Halifax, spent the full week while in Halifax changing this wave change switch before leaving in January 1942.

LADY HAWKINS proceeded to Boston, by a round about way, where she took on three passengers and then sailed for Bermuda. She was instructed to hug the American coast down to Cape Hatteras then proceed directly to Bermuda. She was unescorted and the evening of January 18th found her steaming along in beautiful weather. Although Fred, Bob, and Lawrence were continually receiving distress signals from ships being torpedoed near their route, the weather was so nice LADY HAWKINS steamed along as though she did not have a care in the world.

This very pleasant mid-winter cruise came to a sudden and tragic end at 2 AM January 19th, 1942, when a German U-boat scored a direct hit. LADY HAWKINS was severely damaged and sank rapidly. Those on board had little time for anything except to jump into the Atlantic and cling to whatever they could find until rescued by a ship's boat. Daylight brought some very sad news; only one boat (certified to carry sixty-three persons) had managed to get away from LADY HAWKINS, and in this boat were seventy-six persons, the sole survivors of LADY HAWKINS. The only navigating officer to survive was Percy A. Kelly and the only radio officer was Bob Clayton. Bob told Percy that there was no distress signal sent because the main transmitter had been smashed to pieces when the torpedo exploded. The radio room on LADY HAWKINS had been constructed midships on the upper deck, like so many of the day, to facilitate antenna connections which were very heavy and numerous in those days. On the "Lady Boats" this cabin was joined to the officers' quarters on the upper deck (boat deck), and the operators did not have to go outside when travelling between their station and the remainder of the ship.

250 people had lost their lives from this torpedoing and the seventy-six who survived remained in the open boat until rescued by the COAMO five days later. The COAMO was bound from New York to Puerto Rico with 500 passengers. COAMO was American and would have used call sign WKCW had it not been for the war. LADY HAWKINS was running under radio silence like all vessels during the war, but if it became necessary to transmit she would have used a coded call sign, two letters, one digit, and two more letters.



HARC Files

Bob Clayton

On March 9th, 1942, while LADY NELSON was alongside Saint Lucia in the British West Indies, a German U-boat sneaked into the harbour on the surface. This harbour is a lot like the harbour at Digby, Nova Scotia, small and narrow, and alongside with the LADY NELSON was a tanker and a British ship. This U-boat fired three torpedoes and the first landed harmlessly on the beach and exploded missing the tanker for which it had been aimed. The other two managed direct hits in both LADY NELSON and the British ship, sinking both alongside the dock. The mooring lines securing both ships to the dock held and prevented the two ships from toppling over on their sides.

The three Radio Officers in LADY NELSON at the time were Tom Gavilroff as Chief, Patrick Falvey as second and Earl Hooper as third. Tom remained with LADY NELSON while she was floated and towed to Mobile, Alabama. There she was repaired and converted into a hospital ship to survive the war in that capacity. Pat Falvey and Earl Hooper along with many of the other crewmembers were repatriated home to Canada in the sister ship LADY DRAKE.

Captain Percy Kelly, former Chief Officer in LADY HAWKINS, was now Captain of LADY DRAKE. After taking on board survivors from LADY NELSON, they steamed north to Bermuda. The Chief Radio Officer in LADY DRAKE was Alfred Millward, Ron Keddy was second and John O'Niel was third. Pat Falvey and Earl Hooper were passengers on this trip so did not stand any watch with the three LADY DRAKE operators. LADY DRAKE departed Bermuda at 9 AM on May 4th, 1942, on her final leg of the voyage to Halifax. Twelve hours later found her steaming full speed and about 190 miles north of Bermuda. About 9 PM she was torpedoed and sank, but twelve men only were killed. The other 274 on board, including the radio operators from both vessels made it safely away in five boats to be picked up three days later by an American Minesweeper.

The first few years of the war were very rough days for merchant seamen. These seamen certainly deserve any credit they ever received. Many went back time and again. Several survived the loss of their ship two, three, or more times from U-boat torpedoes.

LADY RODNEY was the only ship of these five to go through the war unscathed. She and LADY NELSON were the only two on the conclusion of the war and about 1957 both were sold to Egypt. LADY RODNEY was sunk and lost in the Suez Canal during the six-day war of 1967. LADY NELSON ended her days as the Egyptian ship ALWADI with call sign SUBY.

CLARE LILLEY

Getting back closer to home, Camperdown did not use a coded call sign during the war but made good use of the VCS call. One of many such incidents occurred on March 17th, 1942, two and one half years after war had been declared.

On March 12th, 1942, the steamship CLARE LILLEY departed New York with an American Coastal Pilot on board to pilot the vessel to Halifax, Nova Scotia, via Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Shoals. CLARE LILLEY was a product of World War I. She was built in 1917 at Sunderland and was using the third name assigned to her, formerly the EASTCLIFFE and CLIFFSIDE. She was a general cargo vessel of 3,726 gross tons. Her international call sign was GWVL and she would have been assigned the standard coded call sign, two letters, one digit and two more letters. Her wireless room on this voyage in March 1942 was in charge of Chief Radio Operator C. W. Hodgson and under him was second operator J. Cockburn, and third operator A. B. Taylor. Hodgson was 41, Cockburn 18, and Taylor 19. All that I could find on the wireless equipment was that she was equipped with a spark station operating on 800, 706, and 600 meters, which would have been 375, 425, and 500 kilohertz respectively. This was a very common installation for vessels of this type and just prior to this period. I do not know which company had manufactured her equipment. Her radio accounts were with Vergottis Limited, London, England.

Captain J. Middleton (68 years old), from London, England, was in command of CLARE LILLEY and they were proceeding along on a voyage that had commenced at Manchester, England, on January 2nd, 1942. They were to enter Halifax and join an eastbound, slow convoy for Europe. Her cargo contained 1,177 tons of munitions for the war in Europe.

Friday March 13th found her steaming through a snowstorm, visibility very poor, but on March 14th and 15th she had a routine run with nothing to report. Monday March 16th, 1942, CLARE LILLEY anchored in Shelburne harbour at 7:03 PM per orders received from naval control. She asked and was given permission by the naval authorities that had boarded her to remain at this anchorage overnight. At 4:00 AM March 17th, Captain Middleton signaled the naval authorities requesting permission to get under way for Halifax. He wanted to have plenty of time in order to enter Halifax before dark that evening. Permission was granted and CLARE LILLEY hove up her anchor and proceeded on her way. At 8:00 PM March 17th, 1942, CLARE LILLEY passed the Sambro Light Vessel and ran for ten minutes on the same course. She then altered this course to 333 degrees (true) in order to take her to the first red flashing buoy, the swept channel in the approaches to Halifax harbour. At the time of this course alteration CLARE LILLEY was about one-half mile to the port (left) of the Sambro Light Vessel. It was now snowing fairly heavy and had been off and on since 6:00 PM. The visibility was ranging from good to poor, but Captain Middleton had a good fix on his position from the Sambro Light Vessel so decided to continue and made the first flashing red buoy on the port bow. All this time the wind was increasing and blowing from the East South East to about force six (strong breeze 25 to 31 miles per hour) with snow flurries that made it difficult to see at times. However they managed to pass the buoys with no trouble and when they came up to the whistle buoy brought this along the starboard (right) bow to shape up for the Pilot Boat Station.

In the meantime the CLARE LILLEY's speed had been reduced several times and she had stopped at one time, because another vessel was on her port (left) side and she had kept dropping down towards her. At one point Captain Middleton had rung for full speed astern and gave three short blasts on his steam whistle (I am going astern) to avoid colliding with the other vessel. At about this time the Port War Signal Station signaled to CLARE LILLEY via signal lamp and asked her name. They replied with their call sign GWVL. For some reason this made no sense to the duty signalman and he asked for a repeat so they gave him her name CLARE LILLEY spelled out. On receipt of this the signalman at the Port War Signal Station told them they were to report to the examination vessel.

It should be noted that during the war each of our harbours had a naval vessel stationed in the harbour entrance to board each and every vessel that approached to make certain it was who and what it claimed to be. These vessels were known as examination vessels and those ships to be given this title officially are as follow with their call sign:

CGDB	ANDREE DUPRE
CGPX	ADVERSUS
CGPS	CHALEUR

CGPL	FLEUR DE LIS
CGSR	FRENCH
CGFM	MALASPINA
CGDR	MACSIN
CGLX	MONT JOLI

They were small vessels rounded up at the outbreak of the war for this purpose. As can be seen several were from the Marine Section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

When Captain Middleton was told to report to this examination vessel he then asked the Port War Signal Station, "Where is the Pilot Boat?" twice by signal lamp. He did not receive a reply to either request. At about 9:30 PM Captain Middleton asked Chief Officer I. T. Jones to stand by the anchors but to wait awhile because they might find the Pilot Boat and while waiting they suddenly noticed the breakers (the sea breaking on the rocks) right abreast on their port (left) side. The engines at that time were going slow ahead and Captain Middleton immediately rang for full astern, but the ship held and did not move. The engines were then worked at various speeds until 10:24 PM, but the ship would not move. She was hard and fast on the rocks amidships on the port (left) side. Chief Officer Jones, at Captain Middleton's request, went and sounded the tanks and found twenty-four feet of water in the ship amidships.

Captain Middleton then had Bosun C. S. Sheldon sound all the ship's bilges. Sheldon reported they were dry from forward of the Bridge. Chief Engineer W. G. Mitchell, in the meantime, had reported to Captain Middleton that water was spouting up through the engine room tank. Captain Middleton realized how serious this was and gave the order to clear away the boats in preparation for abandoning ship. Chief operator Hodgson, standing by in the wireless room, commenced transmitting SOS. This was heard for miles around the coast. About this time the port main steam pipe burst with a slight explosion and a vast quantity of steam escaped which made a terrible noise and covered all of the midship section of the ship. Realizing CLARE LILLEY's cargo contained so much explosive material, this explosion caused the crew to panic and try to get clear of the ship as fast as possible. They crowded into the starboard lifeboat and started to lower away. Some left in life rafts. While the starboard lifeboat was being lowered, the after fall (rear lines supporting the boat) took charge with the result that the boat was left hanging by the forward end. On this, several jumped out of the boat and into the sea and others may have been thrown out of the boat. Quite a few managed to scramble back on board by the ladders that had been hung over the ship's side and some ropes. One man was left helpless in the boat with the ship's cat that broke away from the ship and drifted all night. The Navy rescued this man and the cat the next day.

Those ashore told those aboard CLARE LILLEY to fire a line ashore and they did and the first rocket was successful. CLARE LILLEY's crew then made fast a 3 ½ inch manila rope to this line which was hauled on shore and made fast there and the other end was secured to the mainmast of CLARE LILLEY. As they did not have a breeches buoy available those ashore advised CLARE LILLEY they felt those left on board would be safer if they remained on board. Captain Middleton agreed with this decision and told the remainder not to go. They should await daylight.

Daylight on March 18th, 1942 found the naval authorities removing the remainder of the crew with the exception of Captain Middleton and Chief Officer Jones. Captain Middleton felt it his duty to remain on board CLARE LILLEY until the danger was more pronounced, but that afternoon the naval authorities again boarded CLARE LILLEY insisting that Captain Middleton and Jones proceed ashore with the remainder of the crew. Although Captain Middleton protested, he complied with these orders.

Captain Middleton blamed the loss of his ship on the fact that the Pilot Boat was not on station, claiming that the weather was such that a pilot could have easily gotten on board. He claimed the cause was due to the fact they must have been further west of the whistle buoy than they had calculated, blaming this on the various speed changes. The CLARE LILLEY was not a high-powered ship and could only manage from six to six and one-half knots. An ebb tide, the wind, and the swell were also contributing factors.

On March 19th, 1942 Captain Middleton again boarded the CLARE LILLEY with a Naval Officer. He found that she had been looted of everything of value as regards to the personal effects of the officers and

crew, and the ship's stores. The stores alone taken on board at New York were valued at \$1,800 (1942 American). There had been no guard posted either on the shore or on the ship to guard the vessel after Captain Middleton had departed. In the mind of the fishermen of Nova Scotia a shipwreck becomes the property of those on a first there, first serve, basis, once the last crewmember has left the vessel. Three of the crew and two military gunners carried in CLARE LILLEY at the time were drowned. Thirty-six survived this shipwreck. Those lost were Patrick Molloy aged 40, James Rafter 24, Charles Cooney 44, and the two gunners, Vincent Haithwaite 19, and Charles E. Bond 28.

The late Albert M. Spencer was one of the operators on the staff of station VCS at the time of this incident. He had a brother Simeon N. Spencer who was also an operator and operated VCS over the years. Bert Spencer assisted in the rescue of the CLARE LILLEY crew, those who attempted to make it ashore when the steam line blew, by jumping in the cold water and pulling them to dry land. At a later date a tribute was paid to Bert for his heroic performance at the scene of this incident. Those at the scene stated they still shivered at the thought of Bert jumping into that cold water. He was on his way home from a dance in the village.



VCS Station Files

This is the wreck of CLARE LILLEY.



VCS Station Files

This is some of the wreckage from the CLARE LILLEY. That was a tear in the old photograph up in the left hand corner.



J. Gerald Spears

This is the body of one of the British Naval Gunners from CLARE LILLEY.

On close examination of the photographs that appear on these pages of CLARE LILLEY, you will note on the left a section of the bow of KENKERRY still visible. Shortly after the CLARE LILLEY struck the ledge she broke in two. The bow section remained on the shore but the stern slid down the ocean floor. Twenty-two years later, some of her cargo started to wash ashore. Some had been found with live fuses. In September 1964 a Navy diving team was called in to clean up the mess. With the assistance of HMCS GRANBY, with call sign CYQX, and HMC YMT-12, call sign CGJN, six hundred of the CLARE LILLEY bombs were towed out and disposed of in a dumping area. The bow section of the freighter could still be seen at this time. The six hundred bombs removed to the dumping site consisted of 150-pound general-purpose weapons that presented no danger while submerged but were potentially dangerous when they dried out.

Two years after the removal of these bombs, in 1966, this minesweeper HMCS GRANBY was replaced with the Prestonian Class frigate HMCS VICTORIAVILLE, with call sign CGVF. VICTORIAVILLE was renamed HMCS GRANBY at this time and was the Diving Tender at Halifax until 1973. She was sold for scrap in 1974, the last of the Canadian River Class and Prestonian Class frigates to be scrapped. And of further interest is the fact that HMC YMT-12 was renamed HMCS GRANBY in 1998.

A sister of YMT-12, the YMT-11 with call sign CGVY, was to be renamed HMCS CORMORANT in 1998 but the West Coast divers did not like this and wanted her renamed HMCS MANATEE. She had sailed around via the Panama Canal and based on the West Coast for some years. The last I heard they were still calling her "Eleven Boat" and she still had the CGVY call sign.

In 1998 another Navy diving team had to be called in to remove more of this debris left from CLARE LILLEY. This time they used CFAV SECHELET, with call sign CGJA, to remove more of these bombs out to the dumping ground.

The street down to the site of the wreck is now named Clare Lilley.

October 31, 2007

This is the Seventh Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"
by Spurgeon G. Roscoe
Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961
Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto
Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington
First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108
Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054
Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

THE FAIRMILES

When I realized I was never going to have a book on this history I kept adding to it for my own enjoyment especially this section on the Fairmiles. Joan and I will have been married 46 years on September 7th, 2007. Joan is one of the Kinney girls from Kinney Road, Ashmore, Nova Scotia and her family helped construct these Fairmiles so the 15 Weymouth built copies are like family. Jerry Proc VE3FAB now has his version of this section on his web site under Fairmile Radio Fit.

Our shipyards were to turn out 456 merchant ships and some 300 naval vessels during World War II. These ships were built by a number of shipyards and the size of the yard normally dictated the size of the ships it constructed. The little ships known by the name Fairmile fascinate me most of the naval ships constructed. The British Fairmile Company designed them, so the British and British Commonwealth navies called them Fairmiles. They were designed as a sister ship to the Submarine Chaser of the United States Navy. At the outbreak of World War II steps were taken for the smaller Canadian shipyards to build a fleet of these little ships for the Royal Canadian Navy. Fifty-nine were built in yards on the Great Lakes. Fourteen were built in British Columbia and seven were built at Weymouth, Nova Scotia, for a total of 80. They were not named and were known as HMC ML followed by their number. The ML stood for Motor Launch. Their numbers commenced with 050 and terminated at 129. Their pendant number commenced with the letter Q followed by their assigned number and this was painted on their bows. This was Q050 to Q129 inclusive. Their crews called them "Q Boats" or "Q Fifty" and so on.



Canadian Armed Forces

This is Weymouth built HMC ML120 off the approaches to Halifax, Nova Scotia, under full power.

Actually these Canadian shipyards built eighty-eight of these little ships and eight were turned over to the United States Navy. All eight were of the early program and were absorbed within their Submarine Chaser fleet complete with Submarine Chaser number/names.

Some parts of these little ships were built from a kit and the kits for these Canadian built copies were manufactured here in Canada. My former neighbour, the late Camille Comeau, helped construct the Weymouth built vessels. He spoke of fitting the prefabricated bulkheads in place. These kits were shipped to Weymouth by the railroad. He and I used to talk about these little ships quite often.

Apparently there were nearly seven hundred copies of these little ships built in thirteen different nations from 1940 until 1945. An article written by James Davies titled Fairmile B Type Motor Launch that I managed to find on the Internet with my son's computer is most interesting. He included a beautiful colour painting by Tim Brown of HM ML192 in action shortly before she took a direct hit and was lost. That is if there is such a thing as a beautiful picture of a warship in action with all guns blazing just before she was lost with a loss of life. Apparently there were ten Fairmiles lost in that action that included HM ML192 in the early morning of Saturday March 28th, 1942, on the approach to St. Naziere.



This is the painting by Tim Brown on the Jim Davis site.

All Canadian naval ships were assigned a four letter international call sign, during World War II, which was not listed with the International Telecommunication Union in Switzerland. These four letter call signs commenced with either a CG, CY or CZ prefix. The Canadian Fairmiles used a four character coded call sign during World War II which had a prefix of 4X. The two-letter suffix was changed about every two months. Using any two letters at a time would make for 676 possible combinations. There was less than half this number of ships in Canadian naval service so this left many possibilities. The larger ship, the minesweeper, corvette, frigate, destroyer and so on up the scale used a two letter coded call sign. This was done to confuse the enemy. Which enemy, theirs or ours, became the most confused from this is hard to say.

The eighty Canadian Fairmiles and their four letter international call sign were:

ML050	CGYK
ML051	CGYL
ML052	CGYM
ML053	CGYN
ML054	CGYP
ML055	CGYQ
ML056	CGYR
ML057	CGYS
ML058	CGYT
ML059	CGYV
ML060	CGYW
ML061	CGYX
ML062	CGYZ
ML063	CGZB
ML064	CGZD
ML065	CGZF
ML066	CGZJ
ML067	CGZK
ML068	CGZL
ML069	CGZM
ML070	CGZN
ML071	CGZP
ML072	CGZQ
ML073	CGZR
ML074	CYRM
ML075	CYRN
ML076	CYRP

ML077 CYRQ
ML078 CYRS
ML079 CYRT
ML080 CYRV
ML081 CYRW
ML082 CYRX
ML083 CYRZ
ML084 CYTB
ML085 CYTD
ML086 CGXB
ML087 CGXJ
ML088 CZGM
ML089 CGPN
ML090 CGXK
ML091 CZGN
ML092 CGPM
ML093 CGXL
ML094 CGBN
ML095 CZGP
ML096 CGXM
ML097 CGXP
ML098 CGXQ
ML099 CGXR
ML100 CGXV
ML101 CGXS
ML102 CGXT
ML103 CGXW
ML104 CZGQ
ML105 CZGR
ML106 CZGS
ML107 CZGT
ML108 CZGV
ML109 CZGW
ML110 CZGX
ML111 CZGY
ML112 CYQQ
ML113 CGZC
ML114 CGZG
ML115 CYQC
ML116 CYQY
ML117 CYRC
ML118 CYRY
ML119 CYVC
ML120 CYWC
ML121 CYZC
ML122 CZDC
ML123 CZDF
ML124 CZDL
ML125 CZDQ
ML126 CZDR
ML127 CZDS
ML128 CZDT
ML129 CZDV

George Crowell was the Telegraphist in two of these Fairmiles; HMC ML064 and HMC ML095. He went aboard the '64 right after she was built. The '64 carried a crew of 15:

2 Officers
1 Chief Stoker
1 Leading Seaman Coxswain
2 Stokers
2 Gunners
2 Ordinary Seamen
1 Telegraphist
1 Signaller
1 Asdic Operator
1 Torpedo Rate
1 Cook



George Crowell VEILB

This is the crew of HMC ML064 in May 1942.

George went from HMC ML064 to HMC ML095 and she had one extra crewmember making a total of 16 in her crew. By the time George went aboard HMC ML095 the navy had sufficient Radar Operators that one was assigned to HMC ML095. Radar Operator is George's terminology.



Shipsearch Yarmouth Nova Scotia

HMC ML064 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia

George Crowell told me he worked the Gaspé from the Canso Strait on what they called the Port Wave frequency of 425 kcs. All the small naval radio stations around the coast used this frequency with the coast station and ship on the same 425 kcs frequency. He said his calling transmission was CFL CFL CFL V 4XYZ 4XYZ 4XYZ K – or whatever the two-letter suffix in his coded call sign happened to be.

The Lists of World War II stations provide the following possible Port Wave Stations on 425 kcs:

- CFH** Halifax, Nova Scotia
- CFI** Quebec City, Quebec
- CFL** Gaspé, Quebec
- CFS** St. John's, Newfoundland – this call sign was changed to CZP in November 1942
- CGH** Rigolet, Labrador (Lake Melville - Goose Bay area)
- CKH** Toronto, Ontario
- CKK** Shelburne, Nova Scotia (The transmitter was probably a PV500L and it probably had a leaky condenser in the power supply. They could tell it was Shelburne simply by the hum on his transmission.)
- CKR** Mulgrave, Nova Scotia (Canso Strait)
- CZC** Saint John, New Brunswick
- CZD** Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
- CZE** Sydney, Nova Scotia
- CZI** Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia
- CZJ** Quoddy, Nova Scotia (Eastern Halifax County)
- CZP** St. John's, Newfoundland
- CZR** Rimouski, Quebec
- CZS** Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

The ones we know for certain are **CFH**, **CKK** and **CFL**

West Coast

- CFV** York Island, British Columbia (Believed in Esquimalt Harbour).
- CKE** Discovery Island, British Columbia (Discovery and Chatham Islands lie just a mile or so west of Victoria in Haro Strait, off Oak Bay).
- CKF** Vancouver, British Columbia

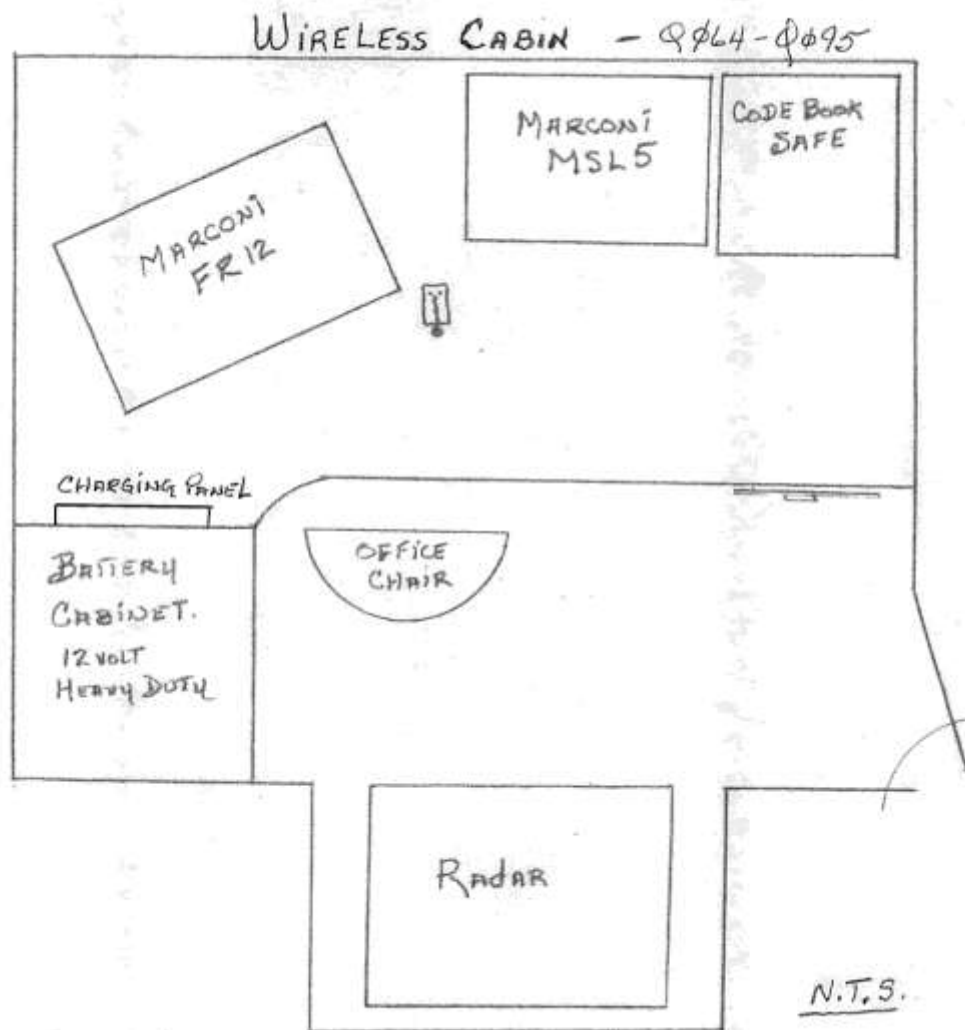
CKG Prince Rupert, British Columbia
CKL Esquimalt, British Columbia
CZM Alliford Bay, British Columbia
CZN Bella Bella, British Columbia – The RCAF had a main station in this area
CZY Ucluelet, British Columbia
CZZ Coal Harbour, British Columbia (Coal Harbour is in Vancouver harbour, right next to Deadman's Island, the site of HMCS DISCOVERY).

Gaspe, Quebec, CFL was a naval radio station in a building just outside the main gate at HMCS FORT RAMSEY. The transmitters (probably Canadian Marconi PV500's) and receivers were housed in the same building. If one can find a photograph of HMCS FORT RAMSEY it should show this station and the antenna. It is very hard to get a good electrical connection (a ground connection) to the earth's surface on the Gaspe Peninsula because of the mineral content of the soil. The antenna to this station had a large counterpoise to serve as this electrical connection, the ground of this station.

The Fairmiles operating in the Gulf of St. Lawrence copied the CFL broadcast on a very low frequency probably 125 kcs. The transmission from CFL was hard for the Fairmiles to copy once they went up the river past Cape Chat, Quebec and this counterpoise was installed with hopes of improving this performance. There is no record of improvement.

One finds it hard to believe that CFL was able to make these broadcasts and still communicate with the ships. This would involve two transmitters and two receivers. The transmitters were probably Canadian Marconi PV500's as stated. The receivers and transmitters were housed in the same building and the receivers would probably be Canadian Marconi SMR3's or CSR5's and maybe an MSL5 or CSR4.

George was running a Canadian Marconi FR12 fifteen-watt input transceiver with metal 6L6 tubes in the finals. This was a very low power transmitter and with HMC ML064's wooden hull, a very poor hull for electrical connection with the earth's surface. Once one had spent some time with a ship's radio station they could tell when the ship passed from salt water into brackish or fresh water, this grounding or electrical connection with the earth's surface is that important. A wooden hull vessel can be a real headache at times. There has to be a sheet of copper attached to a wooden hull to serve as this ground connection. It is very hard to make the electrical connection between this sheet of copper and the electronic equipment. A 3/4 inch brass bolt was normally used between the copper sheet and the hull of the vessel. The ground strap had to be fairly large between that bolt and the electronic equipment if it was any great distance from the bolt to the electronic equipment. Working CFL from the Canso Strait was a very good range and George was rather surprised he was able to communicate at that distance with that station.



The bow of the Fairmile was in this direction.

George Crowell made this drawing of the radio room in HMC ML064 and HMC ML095. George sailed in those two but we do not know the change made when these first Fairmiles had their FR12/MSL5 replaced with the Marconi CM11 transmitter/receiver station. The CM11 had not been fitted when George was transferred off in late 1943 on course. The radio room was in the hull on the starboard side below the wheelhouse and bit aft of the wheelhouse.



Jerry Proc VE3FAB
This is two CM11 transmitter/receiver stations fitted in HMCS HAIDA.

There was another station south of Gaspé CFL. This was a radio direction/finding station at Cap D'Espoir. Gaspé CFL transmitted an urgent message to HMC ML064 giving the position of a German U-boat transmitting coded messages from the Gulf of St. Lawrence on 7333 kilohertz. By the time '64 received and decoded the message they realized they had passed through that position just one hour ago. There were several direction/finding stations tied in with each other in order to give a position and not just a bearing. Cap D'Espoir was tied in with Hartlen Point and may have been tied in with several other stations. Hartlen Point is in the eastern approaches to Halifax harbour, Nova Scotia. The more stations taking bearings the more accurate the position. This was nearly two years before the opening of the navy's monitoring and direction/finding station that became HMCS COVERDALE outside Moncton, New Brunswick. Jerry Proc has an excellent history of HMCS COVERDALE that can be found on his website.

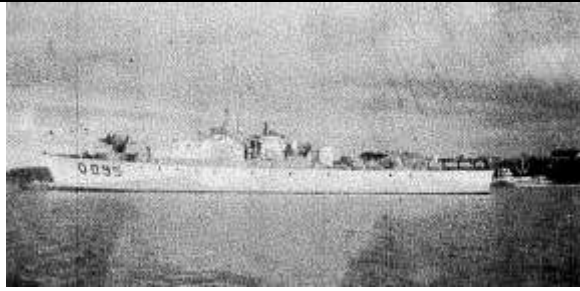
No wonder one's naval career was one course and one exercise after another. Think of the opportunity for error this presented. Getting the D/F stations on the proper frequency to take the bearings and then getting these bearings worked out into the correct position. Then this position had to be coded, transmitted, received and decoded. HMC ML064 did well to learn she had sailed through the position just one hour previous to receiving the message. There had to be a time difference. The time the U-boat made the transmissions and the time '64 passed that position, but there is no question the two vessels were close to each other. It could have been a case that they were close enough that Herr U-boat did not consider a mere Fairmile torpedo material. George was unable to locate the date of this incident and as close as he could get to it was the summer of 1942, probably sometime in September 1942.

George Crowell also told me that one time while traveling alone in HMC ML064 his commanding officer wanted a direction finding bearing from Canso D/F VAX. George explained to him, Lieutenant Norm Williams, that he would be breaking radio silence and Norm told him to go ahead. George called VAX using the CGZD call sign and got his bearing.

The monitoring operators around this coast became so proficient that they could fix a U-boat's position when she transmitted a ten second tuning transmission only. Hindsight is twenty-twenty as they say, but it is a shame some system had not been set up where one of our ships could simply make a short transmission. Each coastal D/F station could have sent their bearing and time of receipt via landline to a central naval office. A navigation officer at this office could have taken all the bearings received and fixed the vessel's position and then transmitted this position via a short coded message to the vessel involved. Yes, I know the U-boats could have made use of this information the reason for radio silence, but it still seems feasible for some such scheme in place for emergency use only. A position would have been better

than a simple bearing as in George's case. This may have prevented a few of the many accidents around this coast, but at this late date and time one will never know.

There is no record of one of these Canadian Fairmiles doing any damage to the enemy, but several U-boat commanders must have suddenly altered their itineraries on encountering them. They were wooden diagonally planked mahogany, 112 feet long and 18 feet wide. They had gasoline engines. HMC ML050 to HMC ML111 inclusive, the early program, had two 635 HP Hall Scott engines and were capable of up to twenty knots. HMC ML112 to HMC ML129 inclusive had two 850 HP Sterling Admiral Engines which were capable of up to twenty-four knots. Commander McKee claims 20 or 21 maybe, but not more.



George Crowell VE1LB

HMC ML095

That is the official version. HMC ML095 had V12 Supercharged Rolls Royce engines. The Rolls Royce Merlin engine was a V12 supercharged gasoline aircraft engine that won the battle of Britain. It was fitted in the Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft and was also fitted in the American P51 Mustang aircraft. The Packard Company was given a license to build Rolls Royce Merlin engines in the United States. HMC ML095 was supposed to be able to do twenty-six knots with those engines but it is not known if she managed to go that fast. I do not know why HMC ML095 was fitted with these engines and I do not know if they were Merlin engines. It was probably a case that the engines were available and put to use in that vessel. The Rolls Royce was a popular engine in the smaller Motor Torpedo Boat and its sister the Air Force Crash Boat that gave those boats a speed of over forty knots. The first American made Merlin engine was on test with the 1500 HP Packard marine engine, at the Packard factory in Detroit, May 1941, according to the book *The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons*, volume two on page 167, by Geoff D. Pilborough. HMC ML095 was launched in May 1943 two years later.

According to the James Davies article, the Fairmile was to be fitted with three marine diesel engines. These engines were impossible to find so they settled on the American Hall Scott gasoline engine. The Hall Scott engines could not be produced to meet this high demand so it was decided to fit these little ships with just two engines. It was found that two engines were sufficient. The World War I American Submarine Chaser had three gasoline engines and this may be the reason these vessels were to have three engines.

According to the book *Maverick Navy* by Alexander W. Moffat, Captain, USNR (Ret.), page 149 the propulsion of the World War I Submarine Chaser was triple-propellers 39 inches in diameter with a 57 and 1/2 inch pitch. The three six-cylinder gasoline engines were rated at 220 horsepower at 500 revolutions per minute. These engines had a bore of 10 inches and a stroke of 11 inches and were directly connected to the propeller shafts. Each engine had compressed air starting and reversing. The cylinders were individually cast and mounted on an open based crankcase. The ignition was Bosch waterproof magnetic spark plugs with low-tension wiring. I have more detail on the World War I Submarine Chaser in my section on Rum Running because one became a Canada Customs Patrol Boat.

The World War II Submarine Chaser had two diesel engines. There were two distinct diesel engines used and Theodore R. Treadwell describes them in his book *Splinter Fleet* on page 17. 243 Submarine Chasers built during World War II were fitted with a new "pancake" type diesel engine capable of driving the vessel at 21 knots. These new engines were fitted with variable pitch propellers making it much easier to manoeuvre. There were 438 Submarine Chasers built in the United States during World War II. The other

195 had to be fitted with a different engine because of the demand. These 195 were fitted with General Motors 8 cylinder 500 horsepower diesels. The vessels fitted with the General Motors diesels could make a top speed of fifteen knots only but all the Submarine Chasers operated together. This would mean four different types, the ones left over from World War I, the eight Canadian built, the ones with the Pancake diesels and the ones with the General Motors diesels. In other words, two types with gasoline engines and two types with diesel engines. It appears as though the gasoline types remained around the East Coast of the United States with some of the diesel types. The rest of the diesel types roamed around the world, especially in the Mediterranean and South Pacific. Theodore R. Treadwell mentions in *Splinter Fleet* that at least one diesel type managed to get the diesel fuel and the water in the wrong tanks. One can only imagine the problems in operating diesel and gasoline engines together.

The International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations for 1933 lists 27 Submarine Chasers still in the United States Navy. 24 were still serving in the 1935 list. 15 were still serving in the 1940 and 1943 lists. The prefix of the call sign of all United States military ships is the letter N. The four-letter call sign had the prefix NO for 25 of these Submarine Chasers and NI was the prefix of the other two in the 1933 list. Mr. Treadwell states that 53 were transferred to the United States Coast Guard after World War I, but I have not found them. It would be interesting to see if they were assigned call signs with the NO and NI prefix. They probably were because it appears from the gaps in the call signs of the 27 listed above that at one time they were in alphabetical order. Those in service during World War II were no doubt involved in this war one way or another, but in coast guard patrols and not as submarine chasers. The Coast Guard apparently listed them as WPC, gave each an assigned number different than the previous naval number, and they apparently gave each a name. A WPB is a Patrol Boat so a WPC probably meant a Patrol Cutter. Therefore, according to these records it would appear that the U.S. Navy had 23 gasoline Submarine Chasers during World War II, the 15 from World War I and the 8 Canadian Fairmile.

The website NavSource Online: Submarine Chaser Photo Archives provides some of the four letter call signs of the Submarine Chaser fleet and they do not follow this NO and NI theory. They seem to simply have a four letter call sign with the N prefix. USS SC508 had a nice radiotelegraph call sign, NURR.



George Crowell

It was several years after World War II that the Royal Canadian Navy was assigned a proper ships badge as we see them today. During the war the crews would often deface a gun shield or some such item with graffiti of one thing or another and quite often they would create a ship's badge for their ship. This is the ship's badge of HMC ML064 and it about says it all.

Each Canadian Fairmile cost from eighty to eighty-one thousand 1942 Canadian dollars and a couple of the original bids were less at just over seventy-five thousand, but most were much higher, and some nearly one hundred and twenty nine thousand dollars. Apparently the higher bids were to cover the cost of a shed sufficient to build these vessels under cover. But as near as I can tell from the records I found they leveled off at around eighty thousand each. One wonders if we could get two of them today for the amount paid for all eighty-eight back then.

All eighty-eight Fairmiles were known as the "B Class" Fairmile. The B class or type had the habit of setting their exhaust stack on fire when run at full speed for extended periods. Each Fairmile had a fuel capacity of 2,320 imperial gallons. This gave them a range of between 400 and 1,000 miles depending on speed. Each displaced seventy-one tons. The accommodation was rather cramped, but comfortable, for two or three officers and fourteen men. Each Canadian Fairmile had three twenty millimeter Oerlikon guns, one

nine millimeter sten gun, two .303 machine-guns, two .303 rifles, three .45 revolvers, and twenty depth charges of 300 pounds each. The armament of the Fairmile varied from vessel to vessel. HMC ML064 was not fitted with a Y gun for the depth charges but HMC ML095 was fitted with one. They had to rig a derrick on the '95 in order to lift the depth charges up onto the Y gun. The model of HMC ML121 at the Weymouth museum shows a Y gun, but Commander McKee felt none of the Fairmiles were fitted with a Y gun. He claims he has not seen one fitted on the photographs of the Fairmiles he has seen.

Each vessel was sheathed for operation in ice. Ice is like glass and will cut or gouge the sides of a wooden vessel as it passes through ice. This includes the ice found in salt water as well as the ice in fresh water. Ice is ice. I do not know what material was used to sheath each Fairmile. Most wooden vessels in this area are given an extra half inch of planking in the area ice will rub a vessels hull. This is probably the system used for these vessels.

Each Fairmile was fitted with sonar, radar, and radiotelegraph. Each carried one radio operator known as a Telegraphist. The antenna was a wire strung to the upper part of the mast and down to a support on the bow or foc'sul head and another length of wire from the masthead to an iron frame fitted on the Engine Room Hatch. This made this antenna a T configuration and with the wooden hull they probably loaded everything of metal on the upper deck of each vessel. The antenna was fed via an antenna trunk, a square box from the radio room up to the Bridge. In this trunk was a copper tube that terminated in an insulator on top of the trunk. The antenna was connected at this insulator and went up to the masthead. HMC ML064 and HMC ML095 left their builder's shipyard with a Canadian Marconi FR12 transmitter/receiver and an MSL5 receiver as her main station. They had a Canadian Marconi CM11 station fitted sometime after they had been in service for a year or more. This appears to be common with all the Fairmiles built in the Early Program; Fairmiles HMC ML050 through to HMC ML111 inclusive. Each Fairmile was fitted with radar and the radar antenna looked like a TV antenna mounted at the masthead. The proper name is a Yagi antenna, named for Dr. Yagi the Japanese scientist who invented it. They aimed this antenna like a pair of binoculars and watched the received signal on several indicators. One would give the range of any target and another would indicate the direction. Rather primitive, but one must admit they felt proud of this equipment since it was some of the first radar equipment to be constructed.

The seven Canadian Fairmiles built by the John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia were:

HMC ML064	19APR41	28AUG41	15MAY42	20FEB42
HMC ML065	19APR41	27OCT41	15MAY42	01MAY42
HMC ML083	20AUG41	24MAR42	25MAY42	09MAY42
HMC ML084	20AUG41	16MAY42	18JUN42	04JUN42
HMC ML111	05FEB43	unknown	09SEP43	09SEP43
HMC ML120	20JUN43	08JAN44	27JAN44	10JAN44
HMC ML121	27JUN43	30APR44	17APR44	17APR44

The dates are: the date laid down, the date launched, the date delivered to the navy and the date the first commanding officer joined the vessel. I do not have the date HMC ML111 was launched.



George Crowell VE1LB

This is HMC ML064 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia



George Crowell VE1LB

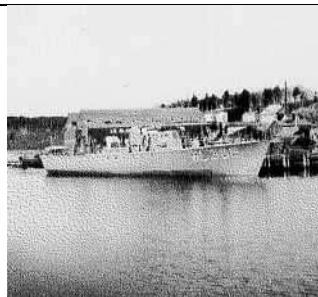
This is HMC ML083, HMC ML064 and HMC ML065 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia.



George Crowell VE1LB

This is HMC ML083, HMC ML064 and HMC ML065 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia.

All eight American Fairmiles were built in this yard and they were members of the Royal Navy for a few months until commissioned in the United States Navy.



George Crowell VE1LB

This is HM ML398 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia, awaiting transfer to the United States Navy

The Royal Navy did not use a pendant number for their Fairmiles. They simply painted their name on their bows: ML123 and so on up and down the list. These eight Royal Navy ships constructed at Weymouth were and became:

HM ML392	USS SC1466	----	27OCT41	27JUL42	22OCT42
Transferred to Mexico 20NOV43					

HM ML393	USS SC1467	NCPV	31OCT41	03AUG42	22OCT42
31JAN46					
HM ML394	USS SC1468	NCQE	28NOV41	10JUL42	22OCT42
21JAN48					
HM ML395	USS SC1469	----	30NOV41	12AUG42	22OCT42
Transferred to Mexico 20NOV43					
HM ML396	USS SC1470	----	Commissioned 23OCT42		
Renamed USS PANTHER (IX-105) 26JUN43					
USS PANTHER was sold on 13FEB47					
HM ML397	USS SC1471	----	28OCT41	02JUL42	23OCT42
Transferred to Mexico 20NOV43					
HM ML398	USS SC1472	NCTN	30JAN42	24NOV42	05DEC42
04MAR48					
HM ML399	USS SC1473	NCVH	20MAY42	26NOV42	05DEC42
21MAR48					

I have found these four call signs only for these eight ships. The dates are the date the keel was laid, the date launched, the date commissioned into the U.S. Navy and the date disposed of.

One will probably never know what radio station was fitted in these eight American Submarine Chasers when they left this Canadian shipyard. It is possible they sailed with a Canadian Marconi FR12. I cannot see them sailing without radio unless they were towed over to the United States. They would not have American radio stations fitted because they were British ships. All radio equipment was classified during the war and the radio rooms in all merchant ships were under lock and key while in port. Actually one had to have a licence in order to own an ordinary broadcast receiver during the war. They also had to have an additional licence in order to listen to foreign stations on the high frequency bands.

These eight little ships were commissioned as United States Ships here at Weymouth. They may have brought their American radio stations with them and fitted them here at Weymouth. All eight sailed to Boston as soon as they were commissioned and were given a good fitting out. The naval museums in Boston and Washington have no record of the radio station fitted in these eight little ships.

Theodore R. Treadwell mentions hearing radiotelephone transmissions in Splinter Fleet but makes no mention of hearing radiotelegraph. The radiomen in the submarine chasers must have used radiotelegraph and one would assume the rest of the crew would have heard these transmissions.

Claude Hall was a Radioman in the American Submarine Chasers and he told me in April, 2006, that his Sub Chaser had a 500 watt radiotelegraph and radiotelephone transmitter. Two high frequency receivers and he said that towards the end of the war they were fitted with VHF and UHF transmitter/receivers. I find that transmitter rather powerful for the class of ship and the time factor involved but I feel confident it is accurate.

These Fairmiles sat so low in the water that they were mistaken for a surfaced U-boat on occasion. This fact created some confusion around Convoy BX-141 in January 1945 that I recorded on these pages. USS PC1123, a 136-foot steel patrol craft mistook USS SC1470, a Weymouth built Fairmile, for a surfaced U-boat and rammed her one night off Alligator Reef, Florida, and nearly cut her in half. Naval crews were trained to take that action against an enemy submarine. USS SC1470 was repaired and when she went back in service she was renamed USS PANTHER with pennant number IX105. The IX prefix stands for an Unclassified Miscellaneous Unit. I have no idea what use was made of her after that. Theodore R.

Treadwell describes this accident on page 43 of his book *Splinter Fleet*. He does not state she was built in Canada and does not indicate she was repaired. I learned that she was repaired, renamed and her new pendant number from Paul H. Silverstone's book *US Warships of World War II* published in 1965. He also states that Weymouth built USS SC1466, USS SC1469, and USS SC1471, were transferred to the Mexican Navy. Bob McQuaid Lt. USN (Ret.) joined USS SC1471 in July 1943 and was with her until she was transferred to the Mexican Navy at Miami in November 1943. The other two transferred at the same time.

According to information I found in the NavSource Photo Archives: Submarine Chaser (SC) website, USS SC1470 was laid down at Weymouth in 1942. She was launched on June 17th, 1942 and commissioned at Weymouth on October 23rd, 1942. She was renamed PANTHER and assigned pendant number IX105 on June 26th, 1943. She was recommissioned on July 7th, 1943, and decommissioned on January 21st, 1946. She was then sold for scrap on February 13th, 1947.

Ship's Data U.S. Naval Vessels Volume II dated April 15th, 1945, gives the detail on USS PC1123 and the Weymouth built Submarine Chasers. USS PC1123 was built at Bay City, Michigan, and was commissioned on February 5th, 1943.

Splinter Fleet states that the American submarine chaser was the smallest vessel commissioned in the United States Navy. The vessels smaller than the submarine chaser were commissioned as a complete unit. It is rather odd that they had the prefix USS and not simply US, as in United States Submarine Chaser rather than United States Ship Submarine Chaser and their assigned number/name.

Ronald Kinney helped build the Weymouth built vessels and the thing he remembers most from their construction was trying to paint the interiors. They became more or less gassed from the paint fumes because of poor ventilation down in the bilge area and had to take turns. Ron and the late Bill Brooks each spent a short time only at this painting, one relieving the other.

When it came time for HMC ML120 to sail out the Sissiboo River to St. Mary's Bay in early 1944, the river was covered in ice. The local authorities decided to dynamite a path through this ice, which is as unfeasible as it is to tow a ship through ice. This dynamite killed most of the fish in the Sissiboo River and accomplished little else. Many in the area helped break this ice after that unfeasible performance.

The late Scott Kinney, Ron's younger brother, told me it has been years since the Sissiboo River froze over. The only ice has been some slush ice up at the head of St. Mary's Bay. Scott could remember standing on the bank at Kinney Shore looking across St. Mary's Bay when he could see nothing but ice. There was no open water and this seemed to happen nearly every winter years ago. Kinney Shore is behind the village of Ashmore. Actually Ashmore was Kinneytown until 1905 and is next to and east of Weymouth North.



HMC ML120 met a fate the majority of our former naval vessels met on termination of the war. She was turned over to the Crown Assets Corporation and sold privately. Her owner in the 1970's turned her upside down and left her to dry out for nine months. Her hull was then fiber glassed and she was fitted out as a beautiful yacht. The state of Maryland bought her in 1986 and renamed her MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE. She became the State's flagship and traveled the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries promoting the unique characteristics of the State. She was powered by twin 260 HP Volvo diesel engines and had a cruising speed of twelve knots. She was operated and maintained by three full-time and one part-time personnel. She had a carrying capacity of 35 passengers and could accommodate 70 passengers while dockside. The vessel also had 3 guest staterooms, main and dining salons, 2 guest heads, galley, crew quarters, sundeck and flybridge. She was the sailing ambassador for the state of Maryland like the sailing vessel BLUENOSE II is for the province of Nova Scotia.

Robert Ehrlich was elected Governor of the State of Maryland in 2003. One of his election promises was to sell MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE. He claimed the vessel was an unnecessary expense for the state. The state put the vessel up for sale on December 11th, 2003. Governor Ehrlich was hoping someone would donate a smaller yacht to serve the state in the same way. One that is not as expensive to operate as MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE.

MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE was sold via the Internet on E-Bay for \$275,100.00 on December 21st, 2003, to someone in Rochester, New York. Her international radio call sign at the time of her sale was WCY9690.

Whoever purchased MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE on E-Bay did nothing with her and she was sold again in 2006. Captain Douglas Blakeslee was Captain of MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE in December 2006 and they were trying to get her registered as a tour vessel to carry passengers. They intended to retain the MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE name with hopes it would assist in their charter work.

I am deeply indebted to Captain Bill Stewart, Sambro Head, Nova Scotia. Bill was captain of the tug THEODORE TOO and had her down as far as Florida. One can get a good description of THEODORE TOO by bringing him up in Google. When Bill had THEODORE TOO in the area he went in alongside the MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE berth and had to move when she returned. He and Captain Joe Scharnus got to talking and Bill learned the history of MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE and brought me home a brochure

on her and a business card of Captain Scharnus. Captain Scharnus and I had some very good correspondence and he sent the following photographs that I trust will be of some interest. I have also been in contact with Captain Blakeslee and hope to stay in contact with MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE alongside her berth Baltimore Harbor.



Captain Joe Scharnus

Alongside Baltimore Harbor



Captain Joe Scharnus

The MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE alongside with the State of Maryland flag flying from her masthead.



Captain Joe Scharnus

Note the wheel and the compass in her wheelhouse.



Captain Joe Scharnus

Note the original engineroom telegraphs.



Captain Joe Scharnus

One of the crew cabins.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the dining salon. Note the photograph of the original vessel on the bulkhead back by the door.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the main salon and the stack area is behind the mirror. Note the working wood fireplace.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the starboard main Volvo engine. Note the original telegraph up in the right hand corner and also note the riveted diagonal mahogany planking.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the port main Volvo engine.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is a good view of her hull out of the water.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is another good view of her hull out of the water.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is her stern with name and port of registry.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is her propellers and rudders.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is a close-up of her side. Note the diagonal mahogany planking under the fiber glass.



Captain Joe Scharnus

This is a close-up of her bow.

The Fairmiles had two “Mother Ships” which were identical and specially built and fitted out to service these Fairmiles. These two were HMCS PRESERVER, which was based at various Newfoundland ports and HMCS PROVIDER, which was based at Halifax and served as far afield as Bermuda and the West Indies. HMCS PROVIDER was assigned call sign CGLJ. HMCS PRESERVER was assigned call sign CGNR. These mother or base ships were equipped with machine shops, radar shops, radio shops, food supplies, anything these vessels might require, including fresh water, fuel, and, a well-equipped hospital. Each ship was also fitted with a heavy derrick. This resembled a bowsprit but was heavy and powerful enough to lift one of these Fairmiles completely out of the water for repairs if need be. Each ship had accommodation facilities for fifteen officers and ninety-four enlisted men. At least half of the enlisted men were highly skilled tradesmen in the various trades necessary to maintain this fleet of little ships.



Public Archives Canada PA106821

This is HMCS PROVIDER off Halifax, Nova Scotia January 17th, 1943.

These Canadian Fairmiles made quite a name for themselves during the war. They patrolled the whole of the North American East Coast from Labrador to the West Indies. They also patrolled the West Coast but I am not sure of their range on the West Coast. None was lost during the war although three, HMC ML081, HMC ML079, and HMC ML072 were badly shaken up when on March 10th, 1943 they were fairly close to the liberty ship JAMES SPRUNT when it was torpedoed and blew up like a huge bomb. This occurred in position 19.49N 74.38W off Cape Maysi, Cuba, which is on the eastern tip of that country. JAMES SPRUNT was on a voyage from Charleston, South Carolina, to Karachi and needless to say was loaded with explosives. The explosion was nearly twice the size of the one that devastated Halifax on December 6th, 1917. It picked these three Fairmiles out of the water, then slammed them back down and showered them with debris, smashing their wheelhouse windows, tearing doors off hinges, and scattering everything movable in all directions. It is indeed a miracle that the only injuries were minor bruises. These three Fairmiles managed to rendezvous with HMCS PROVIDER shortly after this incident, and kept her busy around the clock for several days getting them back in top shape.

In Commander Fraser M. McKee's book "The Armed Yachts of Canada" he states HMC ML065 was with convoy QS33 from Quebec to Sydney on page 141. I believe that should read HMC ML064. HMCS RACCOON was sunk by submarine U-165 on September 7th, 1942, while a member of that convoy. HMC ML064 was a part of the escort force of QS33. Sub-Lieutenant Norman L. Williams was her commanding officer and George Crowell was her telegraphist. Norm Williams and George Crowell had to identify the body of Lieutenant R. H. McConnell. No other crewmen were found from HMCS RACCOON.



George Crowell VEILB

The body of Lieutenant R. H. McConnell on the stern of HMC ML064



George Crowell VEILB

The funeral service for Lieutenant R. H. McConnell

The late Kenneth Weaver from New Edinburgh, Nova Scotia, across the Sissiboo River from Weymouth North, worked on the construction of HMC ML064 and HMC ML065. He worked on the electrical end of building these two vessels, mainly installing the ASDIC equipment. He said all the ASDIC ratings were British and this work was secret. Ken became an able seaman in the tanker POINT PELEE PARK. He visited Trinidad in this vessel and found HMC ML065 there. He went over and asked about the British men he worked with and was told they were still there but he did not get to see them. He felt it was late 1944 or early 1945 that he had seen HMC ML065 in Trinidad but I have no knowledge of her making more than the one trip south in 1943. Captain J. A. Heenan, OBE, RD, CD, RCN R (Retired) stated that while on a run to the Isle of Pines on the South Coast of Cuba HMC ML065 performed an excellent feat of seamanship in saving the lives of a number of seamen in a U.S. vessel in distress. This is recorded in his article Salute to "The Little Ships".

Captain Heenan was the commanding officer of HMCS PROVIDER. His article was my source for some of the information I have recorded here. The late Captain Heenan wanted this history made known so I am sure he would appreciate all I have tried to record here. I first read his article in 1962 and have had an interest in these ships since I read it.

The Canadian Fairmiles operated in flotillas of about six Fairmiles in each flotilla. The 70th and 78th flotillas operated out of Bermuda. The 73rd operated out of Saint John, New Brunswick, after it had been south in the Caribbean. The 82nd operated out of Shelburne, Nova Scotia. The 71st, 72nd, 76th, and the 79th operated out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the 77th out of St. John's, Newfoundland. This was after 1943 when sufficient Fairmiles had entered service to permit this number of flotillas. Actually the 72nd had tried to go south with the 73rd but had received so much weather damage that it had to turn around at Savannah, Georgia, and go back to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

HMCS PROVIDER went south with the 73rd flotilla and was kept busy keeping this flotilla and a number of American vessels in top shape while operating in the Caribbean. She actually serviced at least some of the eight Fairmiles given to the United States Navy under reverse lend-lease, the ones that were operating as submarine chasers, the USS SC1466 through to USS SC1473 inclusive. This fact was included in a signal from the United States Navy thanking HMCS PROVIDER for her assistance as she was leaving the Caribbean for Halifax, Nova Scotia, in April 1943. She spent the next winter in Bermuda as the base supply ship for the 70th and 78th flotillas.

In addition to their normal patrol duties all these Fairmiles acted as fast runners for this, that, and the other thing, a part here, a message there, and so on. On February 22nd, 1944, during a storm, a fully laden unescorted fast tanker had arrived at the approaches to Halifax but could not enter because a U-boat was known to be in the area. The 76th Fairmile Flotilla was sent out to protect this tanker. They did this by continually circling the tanker dropping depth charges until the tanker reached safe waters. It must have been quite a sight watching these little ships circle this tanker dropping depth charges. They all arrived safely back in Halifax, except for broken crockery and some superficial damage from the storm. HMC ML097 had become separated from the others and after her return, on retracing the course she had taken, it was learned she had passed between Sambro Island and the mainland. Quite a navigational feat under excellent conditions, but during a howling blizzard it was a miracle she was not smashed to pieces. I can just picture the radio operators in these Fairmiles huddled up to their equipment and trying to hang on. They had 18 inches of foot room only under their stations. It was February and would have been quite cold so they would have been trying to catch all the heat they could from the power supplies to their equipment. These power supplies were fairly large units and were mounted under the operating positions, normally taking up most of what little foot room was available.

Although I found no record of one of these little ships contacting Camperdown VCS during the war, I wanted to record a feat performed by one of them, of general interest to all living in the area. Especially to those who traveled back and forth to the last Ketch Harbour station.

One of the major tasks performed by these Fairmiles during the war was to assist minesweeping activities. The German Navy at one point tried to block the harbours of Halifax and St. John's by mining them. At one time a U-boat came in to the approaches to Halifax and laid a number of mines. In order to design an effective means for destroying these mines, and to understand them so defensive measures could be taken against them, one had to be caught and examined. On June 8th, 1943, HMC ML053 managed to catch one of these mines and hook it to a ninety-yard towline. She towed it a distance of fifteen and one half-miles to the approaches of Ketch Harbour where eight members of her crew wrestled this mine ashore. Then all but Lieutenant G. H. O. Rundle, RCNR, and Able Seaman John G. Lancien, RCNVR, from Regina, Saskatchewan, hid among the rocks along the shore while these two dismantled the mine and made it safe. Once this had been accomplished the others returned to the scene and assisted in removing the primer and mine mechanism. Quite a feat, which was performed right on the back door of station VCS! Lt. Rundle was awarded the George Medal and AB Lancien the British Empire Medal and the others were mentioned in dispatches. This mine can be seen at the Maritime Command Museum, 2725 Gottingen Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Oh yes, HMC ML053 was one of the naval craft which stood by the wreck of CLARE LILLEY fifteen months previous, and could very well have been the naval vessel which rescued the seaman from the boat with the ship's cat.



Public Archives Canada HN-1165

This is Rear-Admiral L. W. Murray, Commander-in-Chief Canadian Northwest Atlantic, as he pins the British Empire Medal on AB John G. Lancien, RCNVR, "for gallantry and devotion to duty". Note that Lancien is wearing Canada badges on his uniform and Admiral Murray is not.

HMC ML121 was converted into a minesweeper, for a while, and patrolled the Digby and Weymouth areas as a minesweeper. It was believed by many that the U-boats would mine most of our harbours. This did not happen because the German navy wanted to keep the area free for their U-boats. The only mines they laid were at Halifax and St. John's and just briefly at each port. HMC ML121 was not a minesweeper when she escorted the surrendered U-boat, U889, into Shelburne in May 1945.

Joe Casey, Digby, Nova Scotia, is a former member of the legislative assembly for the provincial government. He was one of the officers in HMC ML121 and a friend of Lieutenant Rundle, who used to visit his home. So many of our war heroes had a drinking problem or something wrong with them, it seems, so I asked him about Rundle. Joe said there was nothing wrong with him. He was one fine guy with a lot of guts. He must have had the guts to pull that mine rescue off and he not only did it the once but twice. He did it again the next day when they managed to catch another mine.

HMC ML121 was assigned the international call sign CYXC at the end of the war. According to the records her call sign was CYZC during the war. The Canadian government kept very few Fairmiles on termination of the war. HMC ML121 was retained for a couple of years only at the end of the war and was not part of those kept as training vessels for cadets and the reserve navy. HMC ML104 was retained and became HMCS COUGAR. She was assigned this CYXC call sign and did not retain her CZGQ call sign. It can be confusing!

These Fairmiles had many uses. They were great "Guinea Pigs" in the experimentation of new equipment and clothing. The experiments were conducted in these small craft for what are now our common Gravol tablets for motion sickness. Because of their small size, conditions in them were as bad as any ship in service during the war. Commander Fraser McKee told me in April 2006 that they feel there may be as

many as five still in service. They must have been pleasant vessels in which to sail. The crews would have been young and a very “close-knit” family, including the commanding officer. The commanding officer was usually a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, although a few were only Sub-Lieutenants at the beginning when these little ships first went in service. Being so small they could “scoot” in and out anywhere around the coast and all things considered, those who had the privilege of operating the radiotelegraph equipment in one must have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The eighty Canadian Fairmiles:

They were built at:

- A) Marine Industries, Sorel, Quebec.
- B) Midland Boat Works, Midland, Ontario.
- C) Greavette Boats Limited, Gravenhurst, Ontario.
- D) Hunter Boats, Orillia, Ontario.
- E) J. J. Taylor and Sons, Toronto, Ontario.
- F) Minett – Shields Limited, Bracebridge, Ontario.
- G) John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia.
- H) A. C. Benson Shipyard, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- I) Star Shipyard (Mercer’s) Limited, New Westminster, British Columbia.
- J) Vancouver Shipyards Limited, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- K) Grew Boats Limited, Penetanguishene, Ontario.
- L) Mac – Craft Company Limited, Sarnia, Ontario.

The dates are the date laid down, the date launched and the date delivered to the navy.

HMC ML050 – (B, 01FEB41, 22AUG41, 18NOV41
HMC ML051 – (B, 01FEB41, 15SEP41, 24NOV41
HMC ML052 – (E, 04FEB41, 29AUG41, 31OCT41
HMC ML053 – (E, 04FEB41, 18OCT41, 17OCT41 delivered the day before launched
HMC ML054 – (C, 24MAR41, 30AUG41, 17OCT41
HMC ML055 – (C, 24MAR41, 20OCT41, 06NOV41
HMC ML056 – (C, 24MAR41, 10NOV41, 24NOV41
HMC ML057 – (F, 03MAR41, 26JUL41, 28OCT41
HMC ML058 – (F, 03MAR41, 27SEP41, 24NOV41
HMC ML059 – (F, 11AUG41, 23APR42, 26MAY42
HMC ML060 – (D, 05APR41, 24JUL41, 01NOV41
HMC ML061 – (D, 05APR41, 24JUL41, 11NOV41
HMC ML062 – (L, 12FEB41, 26NOV41, 18APR42
HMC ML063 – (L, 12FEB41, 03DEC41, 18APR42
HMC ML064 – (G, 19APR41, 28AUG41, 15MAY42
HMC ML065 – (G, 19APR41, 27OCT41, 15MAY42
HMC ML066 – (J, 27JAN41, 12JUL41, 06MAR42
HMC ML067 – (J, 11FEB41, 27NOV41, 27MAR42
HMC ML068 – (H, 29JAN41, 25OCT41, 07AUG42
HMC ML069 – (H, 12FEB41, 04DEC41, 28MAR42
HMC ML070 – (I, 01FEB41, 17SEP41, 14MAR42
HMC ML071 – (I, 01FEB41, 06OCT41, 15APR42
HMC ML072 – (K, ..MAY41, 12NOV41, 24NOV41
HMC ML073 – (K, ..MAY41, 12NOV41, 24NOV41
HMC ML074 – (F, 18AUG41, 30APR42, 26MAY42
HMC ML075 – (F, 07SEP41, 12MAY42, 22JUN42
HMC ML076 – (F, 17SEP41, 12MAY42, 23JUN42
HMC ML077 – (C, 18AUG41, 12MAY42, 02JUN42
HMC ML078 – (C, 25AUG41, 06MAY42, 02JUN42
HMC ML079 – (E, 12AUG41, 30APR42, 27MAY42
HMC ML080 – (E, 20AUG41, 20MAY42, 17JUN42

HMC ML081 – (B, 20AUG41, 01MAY42, 27MAY42
HMC ML082 – (B, 20AUG41, 01MAY42, 27MAY42
HMC ML083 – (G, 20AUG41, 24MAR42, 25MAY42
HMC ML084 – (G, 20AUG41, 16MAY42, 18JUN42
HMC ML085 – (D, 31AUG41, 16MAY42, 13JUN42
HMC ML086 – (E, 15APR42, 03OCT42, 26OCT42
HMC ML087 – (E, 15APR42, 29OCT42, 09NOV42
HMC ML088 – (E, 15APR42, 10MAY42 – it is hard to believe they did that in less than one month and the delivery date is missing from the records.
HMC ML089 – (C, 16APR42, 01OCT42, 15OCT42
HMC ML090 – (C, 16APR42, 21OCT42, 19NOV42
HMC ML091 – (C, 16APR42, 06MAY43, 17MAY43
HMC ML092 – (D, 10APR42, 23OCT42, 02NOV42
HMC ML093 – (D, 10APR42, 01OCT42, 02NOV42
HMC ML094 – (B, 14APR42, 12NOV42, 19NOV42
HMC ML095 – (B, 14APR42, 03MAY43, 12MAY43
HMC ML096 – (F, 20APR42, 19OCT42, 09NOV42
HMC ML097 – (F, 20APR42, 19OCT42, 16NOV42
HMC ML098 – (K, 02APR42, 24OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML099 – (K, 02APR42, 24OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML100 – (K, 10APR42, 24OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML101 – (L, 05MAY42, 06OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML102 – (L, 10MAY42, 07NOV42, 14NOV42
HMC ML103 – (L, 30MAY42, 07NOV42, 18NOV42
HMC ML104 – (L, 15JAN43, 03JUL43, 04AUG43
HMC ML105 – (L, 01FEB43, 07AUG43, 05SEP43
HMC ML106 – (K, launched 15AUG43 only date on record
HMC ML107 – (K, launched 16AUG43 only date on record
HMC ML108 – (B, launched 29JUL43 only date on record
HMC ML109 – (D, launched 02JUL43 only date on record
HMC ML110 – (F, 06FEB43, 29JUN43, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML111 – (G, 05FEB43, launched date is missing, delivered on 09SEP43

I believe this is considered the division between the first or early program and the second or last program of these little ships. These 62 were nearly ready when it was decided to order the last 18.

HMC ML112 – (E, 21APR43, 18SEP43, 25OCT43
HMC ML113 – (E, 21APR43, 11NOV43, 20NOV43
HMC ML114 – (C, 21APR43, 11NOV43, 20NOV43
HMC ML115 – (L, 21APR43, 06NOV43, 16NOV43
HMC ML116 – (D, laid down is missing, 25SEP43, 16NOV43 There is a line through the delivery date so they may have been uncertain of that date. Commander Fraser McKee told me in April 2006 that HMC ML116 caught fire during construction but was finished and this must be the reason the dates are missing.

HMC ML117 – (K, 21APR43, 06NOV43, 16NOV43
HMC ML118 – (B, 21APR43, 30NOV43, 06NOV43 delivered before launched
HMC ML119 – (F, 02JUN43, 30OCT43, 16NOV43
HMC ML120 – (G, 20JUN43, 08JAN44, 27JAN44
HMC ML121 – (G, 27JUN43, 30MAR44, 17APR44
HMC ML122 – (J, 20AUG43, 23FEB44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML123 – (J, 28MAY43, 11MAR44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML124 – (J, 08NOV43, 04APR44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML125 – (I, 04AUG43, 18APR44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML126 – (I, 07SEP43, 18APR44, the delivery date is missing

HMC ML127 – (I, 08NOV43 date launched and delivered missing

HMC ML128 – (H, 27SEP43, 22APR44, delivery date missing

HMC ML129 – (H, 04JAN44 date launched and delivered missing

HMCS PRESERVER – (A, 10JUL41, 28DEC41, 12JUL42 (Base Ship)

HMCS PROVIDER – (A, 24DEC41, 12JUN42, 01DEC42 (Base Ship)

Disposal of Fairmiles:

This is some of the records I have found of what became of each Fairmile on termination of the war. Some of this information came from a list with title: Disposal of Ships – Motor Launches – Fairmiles – dated January 14th, 1948. Some of the information came from Marc-Andre Morin, some from Commander McKee and the rest from various sources as mentioned in the text. Commander McKee told me they were selling Fairmiles at a fixed \$3,500 per vessel post-war, which annoyed a lot of people. A couple of incensed letters in the press and only about a year old for some of them!

HMC ML050 was turned over to Marine Industries Limited, Montreal and she became RADEL II for survey work with Standard Oil of New Jersey.

HMC ML051 was sold to Commander C. H. Hudson, Vancouver. There is a mix-up between HMC ML050 and HMC ML051 and if HMC ML050 was renamed RADEL II this one may have been renamed STANBA 1.

HMC ML052 was sold to General J. C. Escobar, Montreal. HMC ML052 was renamed CYRIUS and then LA MARIE-JO. HMC ML052 had served with the free French Navy of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the South Coast of Newfoundland from January 15th, 1943 until the end of the war.

HMC ML053 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal.

HMC ML054 was sold to Captain E. J. Weaver, Sorel, Quebec. This was the second Fairmile to terminate her naval service. The last commanding officer left this one on December 6th, 1944. HMC ML082 was the first and HMC ML108 was the third. The rest of the Fairmile fleet terminated their service in the summer of 1945.

HMC ML055 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal.

HMC ML056 was sold to Creole Petroleum Corporation, Venezuela and renamed ESSO AYACUCHO.

HMC ML057 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal.

HMC ML058 was sold to A. E. Griffen (and another), Toronto and renamed KATHERINE G.

HMC ML059 was sold to Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, New York.

HMC ML060 was sold to B. O. Bissette, St. John, Quebec. The crew in HMC ML060 called her “The Mariposa Belle” from a poem by a famous Canadian poet who lived in the area she was built.

HMC ML061 was sold to the Creole Petroleum Corporation, Venezuela and renamed ESSO CONCORDIA.

HMC ML062 was sold to Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, New York. HMC ML062 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS WOLF in 1954, international call sign CGWR, pendant 762 and radiotelephone “Incident I”. HMC ML062 served with the free French navy out of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the South Coast of Newfoundland from January 15th, 1943 until the end of the war.

HMC ML063 was sold to General J. C. Escobar, Montreal. HMC ML063 served with the free French navy out of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the South Coast of Newfoundland from January 15th, 1943 until the end of the war.

HMC ML064 was sold to Wendell Graham, Montague, Prince Edward Island and renamed SIX FOUR. HMC ML064 had participated in the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. George Crowell told me that at one time HMC ML064 and HMC ML080 were tied alongside each other at Rimouski, Quebec when a good breeze of wind came up causing them to rub against each other. The bit of overhang on the upper deck of HMC ML080 caught in the same overhang on HMC ML064 ripping her upper deck off from the bow back to the wheelhouse. This put HMC ML064 out of service and she limped down to the shipyard at Pictou, Nova Scotia where they put a tight canvas patch on her. She then proceeded back to Weymouth, Nova Scotia for repairs.

HMC ML065 was sold to Eric W. Phillips, Toronto and renamed the AUDREY A and then NADINE II.

HMC ML066 to HMC ML071, are six of the fourteen West Coast Fairmiles. This would make one Flotilla but I do not know the number of this flotilla or if the West Coast Fairmiles were divided into florillas.

HMC ML066 was sold to Finning Tractor and Equipment Company, Vancouver and renamed the EARLMAR.

HMC ML067 was sold to Coal Island Limited, Vancouver and renamed STRANGER II.

HMC ML068 was sold to Straits Towing and Salvage Company, Vancouver. The HMC ML068 was renamed many times as MARINE FREIGHT NO 1, MISS LINDA, SALVOR, SECHLT NARROWS and ST&S.

HMC ML069 was sold to Willard G. Weston, Vancouver and renamed CASA MLA and then HARWOOD.

HMC ML070 was sold to Marine Manufacturing Limited, Vancouver. The disposal list had M.V. MACHIGONNE in brackets after this entry and this is one of the names she had at one time. HMC ML070 was renamed many times as COAST RANGER, GULF RANGER, GULF TRADER, LACHAINA LADY MACHIGONNE and SARACEN III.

HMC ML071 sold to Gulf Lines Limited, Vancouver and was renamed GULF-WING, KONA WINDS, NIMPKISH PRINCESS, NORTHLAND PRINCESS and TROUBADOUR III.

HMC ML072 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A. HMC ML072 had received an explosion in her engine room. See notes below.

HMC ML073 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML074 was sold to George B. Burchell, Sydney, Nova Scotia and renamed ALOMA III.

HMC ML075 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML076 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML077 was sold to Consolidated Shipping Corporation, Sorel, Quebec.

HMC ML078 was sold to George Elie Transport Tanker Company, Montreal and renamed ESSO CARDINAL.

HMC ML079 was sold to Herbert E. Corbett, Oakville, Ontario and renamed LADY ENIT and NANCY GRACE but one would expect this took place after the navy had terminated their service with her. HMC

ML079 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS RACCOON in 1954, international call sign CYQT, pendant 779 and radiotelephone "Incident M".

HMC ML080 was sold to United Boat Service Corporation, New York. U.S.A., and was renamed ALMETA QUEEN, COSA GRANDE and QUARTERDECK. According to the coxswain, Leading Torpedoman C. Muloine, HMC ML080 spent the summer and fall of 1942 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. She struck Prince Edward Island in the area where the present Wood Island ferry docks in a storm in mid January, 1943, and the crew was rescued by a farmer with a horse and sleigh. She was towed to Pictou, Nova Scotia and repaired but was a training vessel after that. He recorded this on page 23 in the book Fading Memories. HMC ML080 was also involved in the incident that ripped the upper deck off of HMC ML064 as noted above. The Air Force recorded Fairmile # 008 as visiting RCAF DARTMOUTH on May 3rd, 1945, on page 145 in the book The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons, volume two, 1945 – 1985 by Geoff D. Pilborough. If this was HMC ML080 she probably served around Halifax as a training vessel.

HMC ML081 was sold to Louis Levin, Montreal, Quebec and was renamed ESSO TAPARITA.

HMC ML082 was sold to Stanley C. Alexander, Gaspé, Quebec. There is a photograph of HMCS MILLTOWN assisting HMC ML082 into a cradle at the Pictou, Nova Scotia Shipyard on page 76 of Minesweepers of the Royal Canadian Navy 1938-1945 by Ken Macpherson. HMC ML082 is flooded and about all that can be seen is her Monkey Island, the top of her wheelhouse. This is dated December 11th, 1942, and the source of this flooding would be interesting. HMC ML082 went on to serve another two years. She was the first Fairmile to terminate her naval career. Her last commanding officer was the first to leave on September 25th, 1944. Commander Fraser McKee told me in April, 2006, that HMC ML082 caught fire at Gaspé in 1944 and was sold as just a hull a couple of times after the war.

HMC ML083 was sold to Lorne Johnson, Montague, Prince Edward Island and renamed LAZY MARINER.

HMC ML084 was sold to R. E. Gamble, Toronto and was renamed NELVANA.

HMC ML085 was sold to United Boat Service Corp., New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML086 was sold to K. U. Gamble, Toronto and was renamed MONTERY.

HMC ML087 was sold to J. R. Trembly, Toronto and was renamed TZIGANE and CHEF TEK8ERIMAT.

HMC ML088 was sold to W. F. Christie, Toronto and was renamed EIGHTY-EIGHT, PENETANG EIGHTY-EIGHT, MIDLAND PENETANG EIGHTY-EIGHT and OLYMPIA III. The first commanding officer joined this one on May 10th, 1943, and the last one left on June 25th, 1945. Not only that, but the first commanding officer was a Lieutenant Commander and he was in command for most of her first six months in service. He is the highest rank, and the only one of that rank, to serve as commanding officer in these little ships, so she must have been a flotilla leader of some description or a senior training vessel.

HMC ML089 was sold to Northern Engineering and Supply Company, Fort William, Ontario and was renamed COASTAL QUEEN, CORNICHE and GRANDE COMMANDER.

HMC ML090 was sold to Brian Newkirk in Toronto and renamed LOUVICOURT and ROSAL.

HMC ML091 was sold to Wendel Graham, P.E.I., and renamed NINE-ONE.

HMC ML092 possibly sold to Radium Chemicals of Vancouver and renamed SUZETTE NO 1.

HMC ML093

HMC ML094 was sold to G. A. Griffen, P.E.I., and renamed ERNEST G.

HMC ML095 this one had Rolls Royce engines – see text above. HMC ML095 was sold to Rudolphe Corbeil and was renamed RODCO. As the RODCO she was owned at West Pubnico, Nova Scotia and was used to haul lobsters from Western Nova Scotia to Rockland, Maine.

HMC ML096 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal and then sold to M's Severin and Langlois.

HMC ML097 this one went to Gen Escobar, but as a re-sale when the boat returned to Marine Industries Limited, Montreal.

HMC ML098 was sold to Irene Sicard of Montreal and was renamed CORITA, BIC and LE ST-BARNABE.

HMC ML099 was sold to Joe Dunkleman, Tip-Top Tailors of Toronto and was renamed DIPEDON and DONARVIE.

HMC ML100 was sold to Francis Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and see note with HMC ML118.

HMC ML101 was sold to Great Lakes Lumber and Shipping Company, Fort William, Ontario and was renamed EDMAR and NELLIE D.

HMC ML102 was sold to Francis Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and was renamed QUETZAL, CURLEW, SALISSA M, MOONDANCE and ENTERPRISE II. See note with HMC ML118.



Marc-Andre Morin

MOONDANCE ex HMC ML102

HMC ML103 was sold to C. M. Weegar, Penetang, Ontario and renamed ONE-O-THREE and LADY SIMONE.

HMC ML104 was loaned to Quebec Provincial Government. HMC ML104 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS COUGAR in 1954, international call sign CYXC, pendant 704 and radiotelephone "Disband Z".

HMC ML105 was loaned to Quebec Provincial Government and renamed DUC d'ORLEANS.

HMC ML106 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML106 call sign CZGS. She became HMCS BEAVER in 1954, international call sign CZGS, pendant 706 and radiotelephone "Irium E".

HMC ML107 was loaned to Quebec Provincial Government.

HMC ML108 was sold to the Radium Chemical Company Limited, Vancouver and was renamed MACHIGONNE II. This was the third Fairmile to terminate her war service. The last commanding officer left this one on December 19th, 1944. HMC ML082 was first. HMC ML054 was second and the rest terminated in the summer of 1945.

HMC ML109 was sold to Francis Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and was renamed QUETZAL II, ARARA and ARUBA. See note with HMC ML118.

HMC ML110 was sold to Louis Levin, Montreal and renamed ROSELINE, MISS KINGSTON, SAINT-LOUIS IV and LA SANTA MARIA IV.

HMC ML111 was sold to Gibson Mills Limited, Vancouver but HMC ML111 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS MOOSE in 1954, international call sign CYQF, pendant 711 and radiotelephone "Incident Q".

HMC ML112 transferred to and became RCMP FORT WALSH with international call sign CGMR and pendant MP33 until 1959. HMC ML112 is believed to have rescued some of the survivors from the British tanker ATHEL VIKING that was a part of Convoy BX-141 January 1945 and was sunk by a submarine in the approaches to Halifax Harbour. I have the full story recorded in detail in Section 7 of Radio Stations Common.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP FORT WALSH

HMC ML113 sold to La Co-operative Transport, Isle de la Madeleine Quebec and renamed LAVERNIERE.

HMC ML114 transferred to and became RCMP FORT SELKIRK but was never commissioned and was sold to H. P. Leask and Roy Pyke, Halifax, Nova Scotia and was renamed AMY MAE. George Drew in Clark's Harbour, Nova Scotia bought the AMY MAE and used her to haul lobsters out of Western Nova Scotia over to Rockland, Maine. On one trip she hit a bad storm crossing the mouth of the Bay of Fundy and managed to get oil and debris in among the lobster cargo. She limped back into Abbot's Harbour and they managed to save the lobster cargo by soaking it in clean salt water. HMC ML114 had served with the Bermuda flotillas.

HMC ML115 was sold to Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company, Toronto.

HMC ML116 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML116 call sign CYQY. She became HMCS REINDEER in 1954, international call sign CYQY, pendant 716 and radiotelephone "Flashlight D". When sold she was renamed SUPERTRADE and POLAR CLIPPER.

HMC ML117 was transferred to and became RCMP FORT STEELE but was never commissioned and was sold to L. A. Shackleton, Mount Royal, Quebec.

HMC ML118 was sold to Frances Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and renamed FRANLISS III. Paul Southall contacted us and said that the four HMC ML100, HMC ML102, HMC ML109 and HMC ML118 that were sold to Mr. Farwell were disposed of as follows. One was to be his personal yacht, one was sent to St. John's, Newfoundland to be fitted with freezers to carry fish to Toronto and the other two were laid up and simply rotted away. Apparently the financial assistance on the one to carry fish did not materialize and he did not know the disposition of this one.

HMC ML119 was transferred and became RCMP FORT PITT with international call sign CGMM until 1959. I have not found her MP pendant number and I do not believe she was assigned one. When sold she was renamed SONDR II. Jim Dowell said he joined HMC ML119 in September 1943 after graduating from signal school. He, with her first crew joined her at Collingwood or Penetanguishene and had always felt she had been built in that area. Their first job was to get HMC ML119 to Halifax before Lake St. Clair

and parts of the St. Lawrence River were blocked with ice. They were caught in a very bad storm and the little ship took a beating and everyone experienced their first taste of sea sickness on this first voyage. They managed to get to Halifax and took up their patrol assignment patrolling the East Coast. While alongside at Shelburne in late December 1943 a fire broke out on the jetty. The fire began to spread very quickly along the jetty and their flotilla was docked three deep with most of the crews on leave. They managed to release the lines from the inside ship and move all three ships to safety, where they remained the rest of the night. In the meantime the fire was brought under control.



Jim Dowell VE3PZP

This is the crew in HMC ML119.

HMC ML120 was sold to Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company, Toronto and was renamed NELVANA II and OSCEOLA. Then THE LADY GALADRIEL and eventually became MV MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE – see text above.

HMC ML121 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML121 with call sign CYXC. HMC ML121 became the INSHORE FISHERMAN and then DENIS D and was broken up in March 1972 – see note and photograph below. The Museum in Weymouth, Nova Scotia now has a nice model of HMC ML121 and this model is fitted with a Y gun for depth charges.

HMC ML122 to HMC ML129, are the other eight of the fourteen West Coast vessels. This would make for another Flotilla with the other six noted above. I do not know the flotilla numbers or if the West Coast Fairmiles were divided into flotillas.

HMC ML122 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed MALIBOU TYEE, NANCY M SEYMOUR and SOGNO d'ORO.

HMC ML123 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed MALIBOU MARLIN and TOLUCA.

HMC ML124 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML124 call sign CZDL. She became HMCS ELK in 1954, based on the West Coast with international call sign CZDL, pendant 724 and radiotelephone "Catapult A". HMCS ELK was discarded in 1956. She was the only post

World War II Fairmile to serve on the West Coast. When sold she was renamed PACIFIC GOLD and TEIRRAH.

HMC ML125 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and was renamed CAMPANA, GULF STREAM II, JORMHOLM, MALIBOU TILIKUM and YOKEEN.

HMC ML126 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed PRINCESS MALIBOU.

HMC ML127 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and was renamed CHIEF MALIBU.

HMC ML128 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed PRINCESS LOUISA INLET.

HMC ML129 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed HUNTRESS, ISLAND ADVENTURERS, MALIBOU INEZ and VIKING.

Looking over these lists makes one wonder if at least some of those knew something when they were sold.



Captain Hubert Hall

The DENIS D ex INSHORE FISHERMAN shown at Shediac, New Brunswick

One of the Weymouth Fairmiles built in 1943 was named the INSHORE FISHERMAN and then DENIS D. This vessel was registered at Hamilton, Ontario, on November 17th, 1950, and was transferred to Saint John, New Brunswick, on January 30th, 1953. On October 19th, 1955, this vessel was transferred again to Grindstone, Magdalen Islands, and her registration was closed on April 11th, 1972. She became DENIS D on February 29th, 1956, but her records do not identify her Fairmile name/number. We believe HMC ML120 is MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE, HMC ML111 was HMCS MOOSE when the DENIS D was in service, and the only other Fairmile built at Weymouth in 1943 was HMC ML121, therefore this is likely HMC ML121. When she was first registered on November 17th, 1950, she was fitted with two new Cummins Diesel Engines built in 1950. Each engine had six 5-1/8 inch cylinders with a stroke of 6 inches. These engines were rated at 350 brake horsepower. The records claim this vessel was capable of making 12 miles per hour with these engines. I have no idea why they read miles per hour instead of knots but it is probably because she was registered in Ontario. They operate in miles per hour rather than knots on the Great Lakes. The records of this vessel as INSHORE FISHERMAN and DENIS D (I have three different sets) do not list any signal letters where it states Signal Letters if any. Therefore one has to assume she was fitted with a small radiotelephone with a two-letter prefix and four digit suffix call sign and would not

appear on these records. Note the wire antenna between the masts in the above photo. This was the most popular small boat antenna at that time and it was known as a Marconi or Inverted L antenna. She was not listed with the International Telecommunication Union. This vessel was broken up in March 1972.

Leading Seaman Sid Rimbault, RCNVR, stated they had a good war in the Fairmiles. He spent four years of the war serving in them. He stated one blew up at Gaspé from someone walking into the engine room with a lit cigarette and I believe this one was repaired at Weymouth, Nova Scotia. According to page 26 of the 70-page report, Report No. 10, Directorate of History, CFHQ, 30 Jun 66, this was HMC ML072 in October 1944. There was one death, two badly injured and this put almost half the crew in the hospital. Sid stated another ran ashore at Sydney, Nova Scotia, but I found no further detail on this incident. He recorded these statements in the book *Fading Memories* on page 21.

I found it rather interesting that two of the seven Weymouth, Nova Scotia, built Fairmiles were involved in the surrender of the German U-boats on termination of the war. HMC ML120 assisted in escorting U-889 into Shelburne, Nova Scotia, in May 1945. HMC ML111 assisted in escorting U-190 into St. John's, Newfoundland, on June 3rd, 1945.

Canadian built Fairmiles served in the navy of five nations during World War II. HMC ML052, HMC ML062 and HMC ML063 were turned over to the Free French Navy on January 15th, 1943 and were based at the French islands of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the south coast of Newfoundland during the war. All three were returned to the Canadian Navy on termination of the war. The St. Pierre Wireless Station was assigned call sign FQN2 and I feel confident these three little ships made good use of their service.

The John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia built 15 Fairmiles. Seven; HMC ML064, HMC ML065, HMC ML083, HMC ML084, HMC ML111, HMC ML120 and HMC ML121 served with the Royal Canadian Navy with the majority of their sisters. Eight were built for the Royal Navy; HM ML392, HM ML393, HM ML394, HM ML395, HM ML396, HM ML397, HM ML398 and HM ML399. These eight were transferred to the United States Navy under reverse lend lease and were commissioned into the United States Navy in October and December of 1942.

These eight became; USS SC1466, USS SC1467, USS SC1468, USS SC1469, USS SC1470, USS SC1471, USS SC1472 and USS SC1473.

USS SC1466, USS SC1469 and USS SC1471 were transferred to the Mexican Navy on November 20th, 1943. Therefore, Canadian built Fairmiles served in the navy of five nations during World War II.

A list of call signs for 1946 lists a total of 71 ships in the Royal Canadian Navy. There are three Fairmiles listed and for some unknown reason they are listed with British call signs, and they are the only ships on this list with British call signs. They are listed by pendant number and not by name. The three are listed as:

Q116	GGVT
Q121	GGVZ
Q124	GGWD

HMCS PRESERVER was sold to the Peruvian Navy in 1946 and renamed **MARISCAL CASTILLA** and renamed again, **CABO BLANCO**. She was scrapped in 1961. **HMCS PROVIDER** was also sold to Peruvian owners and renamed **MARUBA** in 1946. She was taken over by the Peruvian Navy and renamed **ORGENOS** until scrapped in 1961. The International Telecommunication Union and Lloyds can probably provide the international call sign to all four names, but my records could produce the one record only. **CABO BLANCO** had call sign **OBPC**. Any call sign with an **OA**, **OB** or **OC** prefix was a Peruvian radio station and Peru was granted the additional **4T** prefix maybe as late as 1960. To my knowledge Peru did not assign the **4T** prefix to a ship.

THE RAN FAIRMILES

The Royal Australian Navy was created on July 10th, 1911, over a year after the creation of the Royal Canadian Navy in May 1910. The Royal Australian Navy had 35 Class B Fairmiles in World War II. All 35 were built in Australia from kits manufactured in the United Kingdom or kits manufactured in Australia. All 35 were assigned pendant numbers and names identical to the Royal Navy Fairmiles. The pendant number was ML followed by each vessels assigned name/number. The 35 were:

HMA ML424
HMA ML425
HMA ML426
HMA ML427
HMA ML428
HMA ML429
HMA ML430
HMA ML431
HMA ML801
HMA ML802
HMA ML803
HMA ML804
HMA ML805
HMA ML806
HMA ML807 08APR43
HMA ML808
HMA ML809
HMA ML810
HMA ML811
HMA ML812
HMA ML813
HMA ML814
HMA ML815
HMA ML816
HMA ML817
HMA ML818
HMA ML819
HMA ML820
HMA ML821
HMA ML822
HMA ML823
HMA ML824
HMA ML825
HMA ML826
HMA ML827

HMA ML807 was the first one commissioned and was commissioned on April 8th, 1943. Eight of the Australian Fairmiles formed a command under the United States Group U.S. CTG 70.1 at Mois Woendi.

The eight were:

HMA ML426
HMA ML428
HMA ML430
HMA ML801
HMA ML816
HMA ML817

HMA ML818
HMA ML819

HMA and HMNZ Fairmiles formed the 80th and 81st Fairmile flotillas in the South West Pacific in January 1945. This would have involved 12 Fairmiles if there were six in each flotilla as in Canada.

The last of the Australian Fairmiles were passed out of service in August 1945.

THE RNZN FAIRMILES

The Royal New Zealand Navy was created on October 1st, 1943. From 1921 until 1943 the New Zealand Navy was a Division of the Royal Navy.

The Royal New Zealand Navy had 12 Class B Fairmiles during World War II. I do not know where they were built. All twelve were commissioned on December 20th, 1943. The twelve were:

HMNZ ML400
HMNZ ML401
HMNZ ML402
HMNZ ML403
HMNZ ML404
HMNZ ML405
HMNZ ML406
HMNZ ML407
HMNZ ML408
HMNZ ML409
HMNZ ML410
HMNZ ML411

This would provide two flotillas of six vessels each. The interesting thing I found about the New Zealand Fairmiles is that they used the same Q prefix in the pendant number as the Canadian Fairmiles.

HMNZ ML409 was brought back in service from 1953 until 1963. She was named HMNZS MAORI and assigned pendant number P3570 during this commission.

HMNZ ML411 was brought back in service from 1947 until 1965. She was named HMNZS KAHU and assigned pendant number P3571. In 1953 she was renamed HMNZS KAHU I.

The other New Zealand Fairmiles were disposed of on termination of the war in 1945.

THE MINESWEEPERS

In addition to the four minesweepers with which the Royal Canadian Navy entered World War II, many more were constructed as soon as possible. On termination of the war we had a large fleet of this class of vessel. These first four, which I have already recorded, were known as a Basset Class Minesweeper. They were the only ones of this class. I believe their radio rooms were fitted with the popular Marconi station of the day, the one containing the LTT4 as the main transmitter. These new minesweepers were larger than the Fairmile and therefore were constructed by larger shipyards. They were built anywhere and everywhere in the country that had a shipyard big enough. Many yards of various sizes were specially built in the country just to handle one particular type of ship or another.

On termination of the war, our largest fleet of minesweepers was the Bangor Class. There were fifty-four of these ships in service. They spent most of their career as coastal escort vessels rather than actual minesweepers and were a very practical addition to our fleet, and all maintained a continuous listening

watch on radiotelegraphy. This meant they carried several radio operators. All were named after small towns and bays in the country. The fifty-four with their international call sign and years of service were:

----	1942-1945	HMS BAYFIELD
CGRZ	1941-1945	BELLECHASE
CYZT	1942-1945	BLAIRMORE
CYQP	1942-1945	BROCKVILLE
CGTB	1940-1945	BURLINGTON
----	1942-1945	HMS CANSO
----	1942-1945	HMS CARAQUET
CGRX	1942-1943	CHEDABUCTO
CGRQ	1941-1945	CHIGNECTO
CGRK	1941-1944	CLAYOQUOT
CYQB	1942-1945	COURTENAY
CGRD	1941-1945	COWICHAN
CYQL	1942-1945	DIGBY
CGDT	1941-1945	DRUMMONDVILLE
CYQS	1942-1945	ESQUIMALT
CYZK	1942-1945	FORT WILLIAM
CGBX	1941-1945	GANANOQUE
CGRB	1941-1945	GEORGIAN
CGBY	1941-1945	GODERICH
CYQF	1941-1945	GRANBY
CGDZ	1941-1945	GRANDMERE
----	1942-1945	HMS GUYSBOROUGH
----	1942-1945	HMS INGONISH
CGBZ	1942-1945	KELOWNA
CYZP	1942-1945	KENORA
CYZR	1942-1945	KENTVILLE
CYQK	1942-1945	LACHINE
----	1942-1945	HMS LOCKEPORT
CGRP	1941-1945	MAHONE
CGRF	1941-1945	MALPEQUE
CGDX	1941-1945	MEDICINE HAT
CYQD	1941-1944	MELVILLE
CYZQ	1942-1945	MILLTOWN
CGRV	1941-1945	MINAS
CGRY	1941-1945	MIRAMICHI
CYZS	1942-1944	MULGRAVE
CGRM	1940-1945	NIPIGON
CYQJ	1942-1945	NORANDA
CGRS	1941-1945	OUTARDE
CYZJ	1942-1945	PORT HOPE
CGRL	1941-1945	QUATSINO
CGRW	1941-1945	QUINTE
CGDW	1941-1945	RED DEER
CYZL	1942-1945	SARNIA
CYZM	1942-1945	STRATFORD
CGDV	1941-1945	SWIFT CURRENT
CGRN	1941-1945	THUNDER
CYQR	1942-1945	TRANSCONA
CYQN	1942-1945	TROIS RIVIERES
CYQM	1942-1945	TRURO
CGRJ	1941-1945	UNGAVA
CGDY	1941-1945	VEGREVILLE
CGRT	1941-1945	WASAGA

CYZN 1942-1945

WESTMOUNT

Some of the Canadian ships were never commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy. They were British ships with Canadian crews. Some of them had been built for the British or Royal Navy and simply remained Canadian with Canadian crews. Others had been British ships transferred to the Canadian navy and were never commissioned into the Canadian navy. At least it would appear that way and I have not found a Canadian call sign for them. Therefore I simply list them as HMS although LCdr. David J. Freeman, CF (Ret'd) states they were commissioned in the Canadian Navy in his excellent book Canadian Warship Names.

Another type of vessel used during the war that I had always heard called the Algerine Minesweeper was also called an Algerine Class Escort Vessel. The minesweepers became Escort Vessels because the mining of this coast did not take place as forecasted. We had an even dozen of these Algerine Class and all were named for one town or another so those back home had a bit in common with the Navy and the war. These were:

CGBG	1944-1945	BORDER CITIES
CYZF	1944-1946	MIDDLESEX
CYVX	1943-1945	PORTAGE
CYVS	1943-1945	SAULT STE MARIE
CZJQ	1944-1945	FORT FRANCIS
CZJR	1944-1945	NEW LISKEARD
CGBC	1944-1945	ROCKCLIFFE
CYVZ	1943-1945	WALLACEBURG
CYZV	1944-1945	KAPUSKASING
CYZG	1944-1945	OSHAWA
CYVW	1943-1946	ST. BONIFACE
CYVT	1943-1946	WINNIPEG

Each of these maintained a continuous radiotelegraph watch and was mainly a coastal escort vessel. A favourite run for these was escorting convoys of merchant ships between Halifax and the eastern United States. Very important convoy routes were set up between the two areas, with Halifax the major centre for forming the large convoys to the United Kingdom.

Possibly you are wondering why I am using so much space describing these naval vessels. Each of these ships had a very interesting career but the first of these had only the mainstay Department of Transport Coast Stations for communications. Not only that, a number of these vessels regularly communicated through Camperdown VCS and the other coast stations after the war.

The Navy had so many ships during this war that it makes one wonder where they found the manpower to operate them. Canada had a population of six to twelve million only at the time depending on whose record you quote. In addition to these minesweepers the Navy rounded up an assortment of vessels that they called minesweepers. These were former rumrunners, fishing vessels, ferries, lightships, anything that floated and looked to the politicians like something the navy could use.

THE ARMED YACHTS OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

In addition to these ships the politicians sent a crew on a buying spree to the United States to purchase any yachts they felt would be of some use as patrol boats. A yacht, a large steel yacht included, is a poor excuse for a warship. The politicians are the ones that supply the ships. We often said the only good ships were mistakes in the coast guard fleet and I feel the navy felt the same at times. The Royal Canadian Navy had twenty-one yachts that they refitted as Armed Patrol Vessels during World War I and World War II. There were five during World War I and sixteen during World War II. These sixteen were the ships early in the war that had to use the Department of Transport Coast Stations.

The five World War I Armed Yachts:

HMCS FLORENCE
HMCS GRILSE
HMCS TUNA
HMCS STADACONA
HMCS HOCHELAGA

The sixteen World War II Armed Yachts:

HMCS SANS PEUR	CZCJ
HMCS BEAVER	CGLF
HMCS GRIZZLEY	CGJY
HMCS COUGAR	CGJZ
HMCS RENARD	CGLP
HMCS WOLF	CGKJ
HMCS VISON	CGLD
HMCS MOOSE	CGLQ
HMCS CARIBOU	CGLK
HMCS ELK	CGLB
HMCS HUSKY	CGLN
HMCS LYNX	CGLM
HMCS OTTER	----
HMCS REINDEER	CGLR
HMCS RACCOON	CGLS
HMCS AMBLER	CGDQ

At the first part of World War II twelve yachts were based on the East Coast and four on the West Coast. HMCS GRIZZLEY, HMCS WOLF and HMCS COUGAR were on the West Coast all through the war. HMCS SANS PEUR was on the West Coast until transferred to the East Coast on January 24th, 1944.

THE PARK SHIPS

We produced 456 Merchant Ships, as stated, during this war. The first of these were sold to the United States who turned them over to the United Kingdom under a lend-lease agreement. These were all named with a Fort prefix and mainly a Canadian name for the suffix. FORT AKLAVIK and FORT LOUISBOURG were but two of the many. By 1942 Canada decided to step in and supply a fleet of her own to help in the war effort, maintaining a steady supply of material needed for this war and to feed the population of the United Kingdom.

The company formed in 1942 was a crown owned company and was given the name the Park Steamship Company. This company supplied ships to the various Canadian shipping companies to operate and all the ships were named after the numerous federal Canadian parks throughout the country. They contained the word Park as the suffix of their name. There were a total of 176 ships that came under this company. All, except for one, were produced in our shipyards during the war. RIDING MOUNTAIN PARK was built in 1905 and was named the W. S. FIELDING. She was taken over in 1945, converted into a tanker, and renamed.

There were three distinct types of these ships and some of these were altered slightly from one shipyard to the other in order to assist in their construction. An expert on these can tell by slight alterations, the type and the reason for any alterations. These alterations did not involve communications. Each ship carried three radio operators during the war and maintained a continuous radio watch. Each operator had at least a second class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio from one of many schools teaching this subject throughout the country.

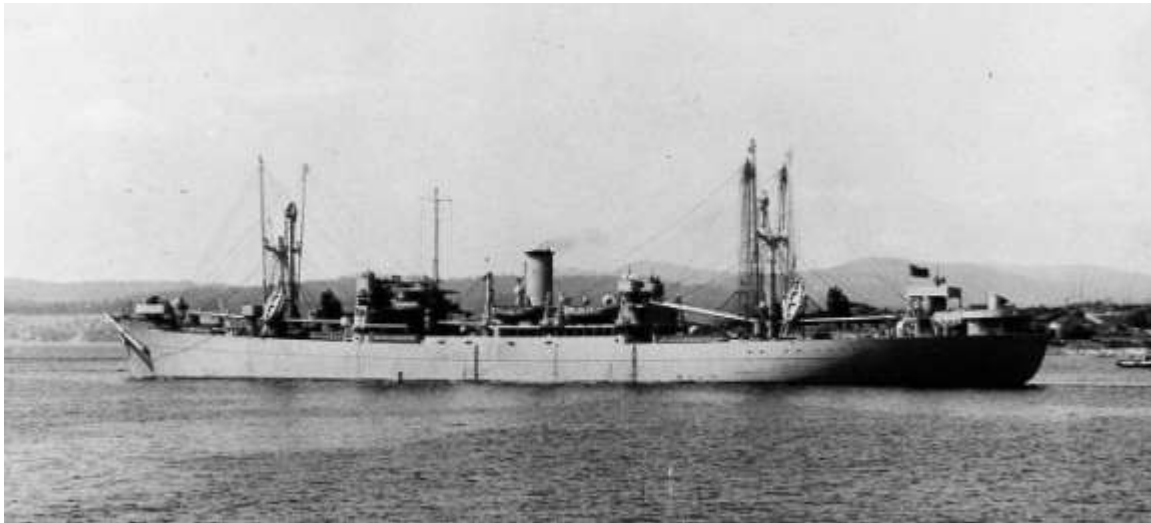
The Park Ships were known by their deadweight tonnage. The majority was ten thousand ton and therefore quite common for someone to refer to one as a ten thousand ton Park. They were all assigned four letter international call signs but used coded calls during the war. The following are the 180 ships with their call signs and their deadweight tonnage. The letter T following this tonnage signifies that this ship was a tanker and the remainder dry cargo ships. Three of these ships were British and one Australian, leaving 176 for Park Steamship Company of Canada.

VDZY	AINSLIE PARK	4700
VCNG	ALBERT PARK	10000
VGGS	ALDER PARK	10000
VCJL	ALEXANDRA PARK	10000
VDQB	ALGONQUIN PARK	10000
VCQJ	ARGYLE PARK	4700
VDZP	ARLINGTON BEACH PARK	10000T
VCKC	ASHBY PARK	4700
VGGF	ASPEN PARK	10000
VGGM	ATWATER PARK	10000
VDDN	AVONDALE PARK	4700
VCKB	BALDWIN PARK	4700
VDJS	BANFF PARK	10000
VDZX	BEATON PARK	10000
VGGT	BELWOODS PARK	10000
VCNV	BELL PARK	4700
VDDP	BERESFORD PARK	4700
VGVL	BLOOMFIELD PARK	4700
VGGB	BOWNESS PARK	10000
VDYB	BRENTWOOD BAY PARK	10000T
VGWV	BRIDGELAND PARK	10000
VDYZ	BUFFALO PARK	10000
VCNX	CARTIER PARK	4700
GFRT	CATARAQUI PARK (British)	4700
VCJJ	CHAMPLAIN PARK	10000
GFCD	CHIGNECTO PARK (British)	4700
VDTC	CHIPPEWA PARK	10000
VDYC	CLEARWATER PARK	10000T
VDDR	CONFEDERATION PARK	4700
VDDF	CONNAUGHT PARK	10000
VCJC	CORNISH PARK	10000
VGVS	CORONATION PARK	10000
VDSB	CRESCENT PARK	4700
VCPC	CROMWELL PARK	10000
VGGC	CRYSTAL PARK	10000
VDZR	CYPRESS HILLS PARK	10000T
VDRQ	DARTMOUTH PARK	4700
VDDK	DENTONIA PARK	10000
VGVS	DOMINION PARK	10000
VGCD	DORVAL PARK	10000
VDZB	DUFFERIN PARK	4700
VDYQ	DUNDURN PARK	10000
VGVD	DUNLOP PARK	10000
VGGG	EARLSCOURT PARK	10000
VGVP	EASTWOOD PARK	10000
VDDT	EGLINTON PARK	3600T
VCMC	ELGIN PARK	10000
VDTF	ELK ISLAND PARK	10000
VDSG	ELM PARK	10000

VCKD	EVANGELINE PARK	4700
VCMM	FAIRMOUNT PARK	10000
VMSG	FAWKNER PARK (Australia)	4700
VCLC	FRONTENAC PARK	10000
VCQG	GARDEN PARK	10000
VCLV	GASPESIAN PARK	10000
VDGQ	GATINEAU PARK	10000
VDRG	GLACIER PARK	10000
VCJD	GOLDSTREAM PARK	10000
VGVO	GRAFTON PARK	10000
VDTG	GREEN GABLES PARK	10000
VGGQ	GREEN HILL PARK	10000
VCKX	HAMILTON PARK	4700
VCJK	HAMPSTEAD PARK	10000
VGVT	HASTINGS PARK	10000
----	HECTOR PARK	4700
VDTB	HIGH PARK	10000
VCNN	HIGHLAND PARK	10000
VGGZ	HILLCREST PARK	10000
----	JASPER PARK	10000
VDDX	KAWARTHA PARK	10000
VGVM	KELOWNA PARK	4700
VDZC	KENSINGTON PARK	4700
VDTK	KILDONAN PARK	10000
VGGR	KITSILANO PARK	10000
VDGX	KOOTENAY PARK	10000
VGGV	LA SALLE PARK	10000
VDTL	LAFONTAINE PARK	10000
VCMV	LAKESIDE PARK	10000
VGVR	LAKEVIEW PARK	10000
VDQC	LANSDOWNE PARK	4700
VDQF	LAURENTIDE PARK	10000
VGGP	LEASIDE PARK	10000
VGVS	LISCOMB PARK	4700
VCQC	LORNE PARK	4700
VDYK	LOUISBOURG PARK	10000
VCPP	MAISSONEUVE PARK	4700
VDZK	MANITOU PARK	4700
VDSN	MAYFAIR PARK	4700
VDYF	MEWATA PARK	10000
VDDM	MILLICAN PARK	3600T
VCJM	MISSION PARK	10000
VDTM	MOHAWK PARK	10000
VCKM	MONTEBELLO PARK	10000
VDWF	MONTMORENCY PARK	4700
VDYM	MOOSE MOUNTAIN PARK	10000T
VDYL	MOUNT BRUCE PARK	10000T
VDWB	MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK	10000
VDYG	MOUNT MAXWELL PARK	10000T
VDDD	MOUNT ORFORD PARK	10000
VDWC	MOUNT REVELSTOKE PARK	10000
VDJB	MOUNT ROBSON PARK	10000
VDZJ	MOUNT ROYAL PARK	10000T
VCPQ	MULGRAVE PARK	4700
VDTN	NEMISKAN PARK	10000
VDZN	NIPIWAN PARK	3600T

VGVB	NORANDA PARK	10000
VDDW	NORWOOD PARK	3600T
VCJW	OAKMOUNT PARK	4700
VDDV	OTTERBURN PARK	3600T
VDDZ	OUTREMONT PARK	10000
VGGJ	PARKDALE PARK	10000
VDGZ	POINT PELEE PARK	10000T
VDTP	POINT PLEASANT PARK	10000
VCJP	PORTLAND PARK	10000
VDMG	PORT ROYAL PARK	10000
VDGF	PRINCE ALBERT PARK	10000
VCNC	PRINCETON PARK	10000
VGGL	QUEENS PARK	10000
VCJX	QUEENSBOROUGH PARK	10000
VDZQ	QUETICO PARK	10000T
VGVI	RICHMOND PARK	10000
VDTQ	RIDEAU PARK	10000
VDZM	RIDING MOUNTAINS PARK	1854(GRT) T
VDTR	RIVERDALE PARK	10000
VDSC	RIVERVIEW PARK	10000
VDTZ	ROCKLIFFE PARK	4700
VCKV	ROCKLAND PARK	4700
VDPG	ROCKWOOD PARK	4700
VDTJ	ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK	10000
VGGY	RONDEAU PARK	10000
VDDB	ROSEDALE PARK	10000
VDDC	RUNNYMEDE PARK	10000
VCNR	RUPERT PARK	10000
VGGK	SALT LAKE PARK	10000
VGGN	SAPPERTON PARK	10000
VGVK	SEACLIFF PARK	10000
VCNB	SELKIRK PARK	10000
VCJS	SEVEN OAKS PARK	10000
VCQQ	SHAKESPEARE PARK	4700
VDDJ	SIBLEY PARK	10000
VDZS	SILVER STAR PARK	10000T
VCLL	SIMCOE PARK	10000
VDDS	SPRINGBANK PARK	3600T
VDTS	STANLEY PARK	10000
VDZG	STRATHCONA PARK	10000
VGVC	SUNALTA PARK	10000
VDYS	SUNNYSIDE PARK	10000
VCJV	SUNSET PARK	4700
VCPV	SUTHERLAND PARK	4700
----	TABER PARK	4700
GFCJ	TARONGA PARK (British)	4700
VDYP	TECUMSEH PARK	10000
VDYR	TEMAGAMI PARK	10000
VDYT	TIPPERARY PARK	10000
VGVC	TOBIATIC PARK	10000
VGVF	TUXEDO PARK	10000
VDTX	TWEEDSMUIR PARK	10000
VDQG	VICTORIA PARK	4700
VDZF	WASCANA PARK	10000
VCLK	WAVERLEY PARK	10000
VCKZ	WELLINGTON PARK	10000

VCJY	WENTWORTH PARK	4700
VDYX	WESTBANK PARK	10000
VCMW	WESTDALE PARK	4700
VDDG	WESTEND PARK	10000
VDTW	WESTMOUNT PARK	10000
VGVS	WESTON PARK	10000
VCKJ	WESTVIEW PARK	10000
VCJB	WHITEROCK PARK	10000
VGGX	WHITESHELL PARK	10000
VDYJ	WILDWOOD PARK	10000T
VDZL	WINDERMERE PARK	10000
VDYW	WINNEPEGOSIS PARK	10000
VCKK	WINONA PARK	10000
VGGW	WITHROW PARK	10000
VDZT	WOODLAND PARK	4700
VDDY	YAMASKA PARK	10000
VDTY	YOHO PARK	10000



Public Archives Canada C39760

This is the SS YOHO PARK with international call sign VDTY

S. L. Cairns, the former Senior Operations Supervisor at station VCS, served in ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK during the war. This particular park is now Banff National Park in Alberta. Stan Cairns graduated from the Saint John Vocational School, Saint John, New Brunswick, in 1944 and joined the ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK as second radio operator, remaining in her at that position until 1946. Don McKenzie, from Toronto, Ontario, was Chief operator in this vessel. Don was Chief because he had a voyage previous to Stan. Crews for these ships were very hard to find and anyone with any experience was not long in finding himself in charge of his department in one vessel or another. Junior or third operator in this vessel was Alex Petrochuk from Western Canada. They were to make three trips in this ship which took two years on a run from Saint John to Cape Town, South Africa, leaving Saint John and stopping at New York, Barbados, then on to Cape Town, returning each time via the same route and stops.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PARK's Radio Room contained all Marconi equipment, at least as far as Stan can remember. She had a three tube Short Wave (high frequency) regenerative receiver believed to be a 3V-SW-8, a Marconi MSL-5 Main Receiver, a Marconi Automatic Alarm and Automatic Keying unit for sending and receiving the distress alarm and call automatically. Her transmitters were the STT-4 Short Wave transmitter and the LTT-4 Medium Frequency transmitter. The LTT4 was capable of transmitting as high as about three megahertz in today's terminology. The STT4 was capable of transmitting from about three megahertz to about thirty megahertz, the high frequency portion of the radio spectrum in today's

terminology. Although the LTT4 was crystal tuned and fixed to each frequency assigned to the station, the STT4 was most interesting as it was equipped with a Variable Frequency Oscillator and could move around the marine frequencies in this spectrum similar to a receiver. Although ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK was assigned call sign VDTJ from our international allotment of call signs, she operated under coded calls during the war. She had call sign GP5TU for some time until this was changed to MB4CA. This ship was on the same run as the POINT PLEASANT PARK that had been named for a park in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia. One of the few, if not the only message addressed to ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK during these voyages was to advise her of the loss of POINT PLEASANT PARK which was torpedoed at 1:55 PM on February 23rd, 1945, off Africa (2942S 0958E). This message also advised her to divert along the East Coast of South America and to string out her submarine nets. These nets were carried by the majority of the Park ships and could be slung over the side of the ship by long booms. If this were done, a torpedo might get caught and discharge in the net doing little if any damage to the ship. These nets had the disadvantage of creating so much drag that they slowed the ship considerably. For this reason the Captain of ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK like so many others refused to use them. ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK continued to Cape Town without incident. Actually U-510, the U-boat that sank POINT PLEASANT PARK, did so only by chance. By this time the war was nearing an end. Germany and her forces had been so weakened that U-510 was taking a cargo of raw materials home for their manufacturing plants. U-510 had two torpedoes only. The first missed POINT PLEASANT PARK and the second nearly missed. Nine men were killed when the torpedo struck and exploded, but the other fifty were rescued after spending ten days in three of the ship's boats.

A monument commemorating the loss of this ship and nine men stands inside the gate of Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. The late Captain Paul W. Tooke, who was third officer in S.S. POINT PLEASANT PARK at the time of this incident, was instrumental in having the monument erected.

On ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK return trip to Canada she carried five naval ratings and radio operator Hugh Stone from the crew of POINT PLEASANT PARK. The radio operators in ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK were very impressed with Hughie. He had been an operator before the war and this was the first experienced operator they had met.

Alex Petrochuk took sick and one of the other operators went up on a high frequency with the STT4 and called Halifax direct stating Alex's condition and requesting instructions. This was the only time the ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK used her STT4 high frequency transmitter. The Captain was told to leave Alex at Barbados, as they were not far from there at the time. Hugh Stone filled in and stood watches with Don and Stan for the remainder of the voyage home.

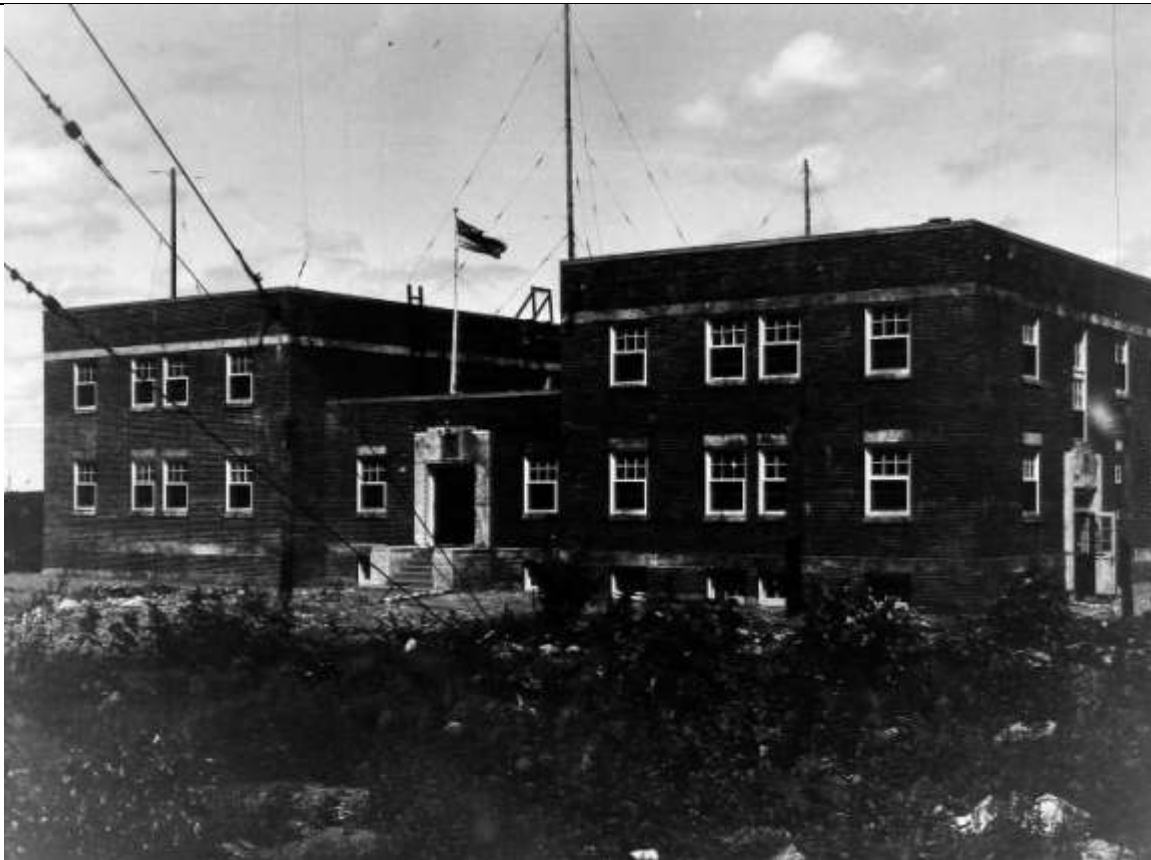
Carrying three operators aboard each vessel was the British procedure. Canada, being a British Commonwealth Country, favoured this procedure over and above that of the United States. With three operators the ship had a much better chance of obtaining favourable communications. If the junior operator was unable to handle a watch until sufficiently trained, there were two others to maintain a twenty-four hour watch in the radio room. The American equivalent of these Park ships was their famous Liberty Ship. To my knowledge these American ships carried only two operators. The chief operator must have had his hands full trying to maintain a twenty-four hour watch until he could unload an incompetent junior operator assigned to him. I did learn, through a former shipmate, of one British operator who had his certificate cancelled and was refused to have it reinstated after he failed to recognize his call sign during the war. Apparently he had copied and logged a call to his ship but failed to recognize the call sign. This was a rather severe penalty, but one which would have cleaned up the act of many. Since they were not allowed to transmit unless in an emergency, trying to explain why you had not received a course change sent many hours ago would have been something else. There had to be many fascinating experiences from the many radio rooms sailing around the world during the war. In addition to the famous Park fleet Canada had the remainder of her fleet at sea during the war. The "Lake Boats" were sent on deep-sea voyages, which must have been rather unusual and all of these ships would have carried the normal three radio operators.

The late Leo Irwin, a former radio operator on the staff of station VCS, sailed in the HILLCREST PARK during the war making a number of voyages back and forth between this area and the United Kingdom. Her radio room was another Marconi installation identical to ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK. The late Gus

Crewe retired as Technical Station Manager of station VCS and sailed in three ships of the Park fleet during the war. He made a number of voyages to the United Kingdom, Mediterranean, and Australia in MOUNT ORFORD PARK, FAIRMOUNT PARK, and DUFFERIN PARK. Gus had graduated from the Eastern Radio School, Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1943, and after a short while as radio operator ground crew at Dorval Airport, Quebec, he joined the merchant Navy manning pool. Gus was one of the few Canadians to obtain a first class Certificate and did so during the early period of his career.

HALIFAX RADIO CFH AND THE NAVAL RADIO STATIONS

The Marconi station acquired by the Royal Canadian Navy at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia was soon found to be rather overloaded with the addition of all the ships assigned to the Navy. Glace Bay was the most powerful station in eastern Canada at the time and continued to serve the Navy throughout the war. With the expanding naval activities, steps had to be taken to have better communications. Therefore the Royal Canadian Navy was to expand its own station, to be four times as powerful as the Glace Bay Station, and designed to control the North Atlantic convoy routes. Not only was it to be more powerful, it was the first Canadian coastal station to use the high frequency portion of the radio spectrum. This station was to communicate with all ships, both naval and merchant, and therefore had both naval and civilian operators on the staff, one Department of Transport operator on each shift with the naval radio telegraph operators. The first person sent there in charge of the D.O.T. staff was Charles Williams. Charlie at the time of this promotion was senior operator at Camperdown VCS. The call sign of this new station was CFH but during the war it used a continually changing coded call sign. CFH opened a few years prior to World War II in the brick building at the foot of North Street in the city of Halifax. This was near the centre gate of HMCS STADACONA. The new station, the expansion of CFH, did not use 500 kilohertz and any vessel wanting to communicate with it had to use one of the high frequency bands.



Public Archives Canada PA114455

This is the Albro Lake Operations Building on August 16th, 1943.



Public Archives Canada PA114456

This is another view of the Albro Lake Operations Building on August 16th, 1943.



Public Archives Canada PA114457

This is the Albro Lake Operations Building on August 16th, 1943.

The transmitters of this new station were located at the village of Newport Corner, Nova Scotia near the town of Windsor. Shortly after the transmitters of this new station were in service, the receiving site and operating positions were moved from HMCS STADACONA and were located outside Dartmouth, Nova Scotia in the Village of Albro Lake. The transmitters were controlled via normal telephone lines. This new station became the most powerful broadcasting unit in Canada, and was believed at the time of construction to be the most modern naval radio station in the world. At that time it had twenty transmitters and the main transmitter had an output of 80,000 watts. This new station cost Canada six million dollars, but it was estimated that the cost was repaid in three months in the amount of North Atlantic shipping saved. When this station was first “turned on” in May 1943 it must have seemed like one huge light going on to those trying to communicate between the ships at sea and the offices ashore. There must have been nearly a thousand ships copying the signals from this station at any given time during the war. During the year 1944 this station’s message traffic averaged one million code groups a month. A standby diesel power plant made certain that the station was able to operate if the outside sources of power had failed.



Royal Canadian Navy D2/C995

This is the transmitter site Newport Corner on July 22nd, 1942.



Royal Canadian Navy D2/C993

This is the transmitter site Newport Corner on July 22nd, 1942.



Canadian Armed Forces HS 70 4509

This is LS J. Burgoyne, PO L. Schofield, and MWO W. Whitefield, setting the frequency at the main console of the Newport Transmitter site. The late Joe Burgoyne retired a radio operator at VCS.



Canadian Armed Forces HS 70 4510

This is Leading Seaman Joseph F. Burgoyne and Master Warrant Officer William Whitefield testing the power tubes in one of the many transmitters at the Newport Transmitter site.

The three towers of its main transmitter were 560 feet high and two other towers were 320 feet high. The transmitters and auxiliary power plants were housed in brick buildings. The tubes that were in the power amplifier of the main transmitter weighed 250 pounds each. These tubes had to be cooled by forced streams of purified air. There were oil switches that stood eighteen feet high controlling electric voltages of 350,000 volts. The main aerial had insulators, nine feet long and eighteen inches in diameter, each tested to stand a strain of 90,000 pounds and a voltage of 350,000 volts.

Lieutenant D. V. Carroll, MBE, RCN, was the officer who stood by Newport during its construction and was in charge of the station throughout the war. Doug joined the Royal Canadian Navy as a boy seaman telegraphist in 1925 and was a Chief Petty Officer Telegraphist in the RESTIGOUCHE during the evacuation of Dunkirk. On January 1st, 1945, he was honoured with the award of the MBE for his dedicated service in getting the transmitters of this station in service.



Royal Canadian Navy

Lieutenant D. V. Carroll

D. V. Carroll, VE3VC, is recorded in "Silent Keys" on page 51 of the January 1973 QST.

Everything transmitted in radiotelegraph during World War II was done in a coded form. The standard procedure for each naval ship was to copy everything from the station it was assigned to monitor, normally CFH Halifax. Each message was broken down or decoded to the point of the address. Each operator copied

this traffic with an ordinary lead pencil into a logbook. The size of these logbooks was similar to the Reader's Digest of today. I once saw one of these old logs. I wish I had one to retain as an artifact from this war service.

Each naval base around the country had a radio station that any naval ship could work. The naval base at Gaspé, Quebec, was known as HMCS FORT RAMSEY and had international call sign CFL. Canada had many small naval bases during the war. For example there was one at Sydney and Shelburne, Nova Scotia. The naval radio operators in the ships, especially the small ships like the Fairmiles, would copy the CFH Halifax or any other station's broadcasts they were assigned to monitor, but could transmit their message traffic to these small radio stations.

The following is a list of these stations dated June 9th, 1948:

Call sign, authority and location, frequencies used in Kilocycles, type of emission:

* Not yet in use.

CFD Naval Air Section, Dartmouth, N.S., 3468, 4400 A0.1, A3

CFE Naval Air Section, Patricia Bay, B.C., 3468, 4400 A0.1, A3

CFF * Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario 4850, 8824, 13230, 17995 A0.1, RATT

CFH Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. *44.8, *78, *92.3, 107, 115, 2844, 5502.5, 8400, 9040, 12500, 17580, 24070 A0.1, RATT

CFH4/6/8/12/16 Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 4470, 6395, 8370, 12520, 16845 A0.1

CFI Spare, not yet allocated.

CFL Spare, not yet allocated. (HMCS FORT RAMSEY must have closed.)

CFS Spare, not yet allocated.

CFV Spare, not yet allocated.

CGE Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. *2768, 7515, *13230, *17995 A0.1, RATT

CGH Any or all Canadian Naval Shore Station (s)

CGI Spare, not yet allocated.

CGN Esquimalt Radio, Esquimalt, B.C. 2716 A3

CGV Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 5435, 8190, 13510, 15665 A0.1 RATT

CGW Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 5735, 7985, 9055, 10945, 12157.5, 14660, 16005, 20215 A0.1 RATT

CGX Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 2716, 3468, 3480, 6800, 9890 A0.1, A3, RATT

CKD Naval Reserve Division, Winnipeg, Manitoba 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKE Naval Reserve Division, Regina, Saskatchewan 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKF Naval Reserve Division, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKG Naval Reserve Division, Edmonton, Alberta 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKH Naval Reserve Division, Calgary, Alberta 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKJ H.M.C. Communication School, Halifax, N.S. (The Communication School had not moved to HMCS CORNWALLIS.)

CKK Naval Reserve Division, Vancouver, B.C. 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKL Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. 9055, 11500, 17560, 18800, 23125 A0.1, RATT

CKN Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. *44.8, *78, *92.3, 155, 2844, 6600, 16760, 24380 A0.1, RATT

CKN4/6/8/12/16 Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. *4740, 6395, 8290, 12520, 16845 A0.1 (CKN was the West Coast sister of CFH.)

CKP *Prince Rupert Radio, Prince Rupert, B.C. 111 A0.1, RATT

CKP4/6/8/12/16 *Prince Rupert Radio, Prince Rupert, B.C. 4740, 6395, 8290, 12520, 16845 A0.1

CKR Communication Training Centre, HMCS NADEN, Esquimalt, B.C. (This was the call sign of the transmission of the old broadcasts made from CKN that were retransmitted on the 2 mhz band for practice for the naval operators on the West Coast. CKB was the call sign of similar broadcasts made on the East Coast but does not appear on this list.)

CKS *Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. 4850, 9780, 13510, 15665 A0.1, RATT

CKT Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. Frequencies not yet assigned. (CKT was the call sign of HMCS COVERDALE, Moncton, New Brunswick, from 1953 or 1954 until in closed.)

CK? Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. 2716, 3468, 3480, 6800, 9890, 13975 A0.1, A3, RATT (Someone cut a hole in the document and removed the third letter of this call sign.)

CZB *Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario 3468, 8190 A0.1, RATT

CZC Spare, not yet allocated.

CZD Spare, not yet allocated.

CZE Naval Reserve Division, Saint John, N.B. 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZF Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario Frequencies not yet assigned

CZG Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario Frequencies not yet assigned

CZH Naval Reserve Division, Quebec, P.Q. 4850, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZI Naval Reserve Division, Montreal, P.Q. 4850, 7985, 13510 A0.1 RATT

CZJ Naval Reserve Division, Ottawa, Ontario 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZM Naval Reserve Division, Kingston, Ontario 5735, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZN Naval Reserve Division, Toronto, Ontario 5735, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZP Naval Reserve Division, Hamilton, Ontario 5735, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZR Naval Reserve Division, London, Ontario 4306, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZS Spare, not yet allocated.

CZT Naval Reserve Division, Windsor, Ontario 4306, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZY Naval Reserve Division, Port Arthur, Ontario 4306, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZZ Spare, not yet allocated.

If you are not familiar with these old codes, A0.1 was radiotelegraph, A3 was radiotelephone and RATT was radioteletype. Oh yes, P.Q. stood for the province of Quebec and is now simply Quebec.

It appears as though there were grand plans for a large station in the Ottawa area but I have no idea where they planned to put this station. There was a naval monitoring station in the village of Gloucester, South of Ottawa that became the radio monitoring school. This station became HMCS GLOUCESTER and was the home of our branch the Communicator Supplementary branch that was renamed Radioman Special in 1960. They may have planned to operate it from there. As far as I know it was no more than a plan that did not amount to anything. At least I have no knowledge of any naval radio station of that size in the Ottawa area.

I had made a list of these stations many years before I received a copy of the record I recorded above. I made my list from the records at the International Telecommunication Union and listed them by the divisions or stations as follow:

CZE HMCS BRUNSWICKER, Saint John, New Brunswick

CZC HMCS CABOT, St. John's, Newfoundland (Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949.)

CZJ HMCS CARLETON, Ottawa, Ontario

CZM HMCS CATARAQUI, Kingston, Ontario

CKL HMCS CHATHAM, Prince Rupert, British Columbia

CKD HMCS CHIPPAWA, Winnipeg, Manitoba

CKK HMCS DISCOVERY, Vancouver, British Columbia

CZI HMCS DONNACONA, Montreal, Quebec

CZY HMCS GRIFFON, Thunder Bay, Ontario (The cities of Fort William and Port Arthur were combined into the one City, Thunder Bay)

CZT HMCS HUNTER, Windsor, Ontario

CKZ HMCS MALAHAT, Victoria, British Columbia

CZH HMCS MONTCALM, Quebec City, Quebec

CKG HMCS NONSUCH, Edmonton, Alberta

CZP HMCS PATRIOT, Hamilton, Ontario (HMCS PATRIOT was used by the Commanding Officer, Naval Divisions. HMCS STAR is the Reserve Naval Division at Hamilton, Ontario.)

CZR HMCS PREVOST, London, Ontario

CJU HMCS QUADRA, Comox, British Columbia

CKE HMCS QUEEN, Regina, Saskatchewan

CGE HMCS QUEEN CHARLOTTE, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

CZZ HMCS SCOTIAN, Halifax, Nova Scotia

CZL HMCS STAR, Hamilton, Ontario

CKH HMCS TECUMSEH, Calgary, Alberta

CKF HMCS UNICORN, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

CZN HMCS YORK, Toronto, Ontario

CKN HMCS ALDERGROVE, Aldergrove, British Columbia (This station was the West Coast sister of CFH HMCS ALBRO LAKE. CFH was known as Halifax Radio and CKN was known as Vancouver Radio. Both stations were constructed during World War II and opened in 1943. HMCS ALDERGROVE was the operations site with Matsqui the transmitter site. HMCS ALBRO LAKE was the operations site with Newport Corner the transmitter site. Both ALDERGROVE and ALBRO LAKE were simply NRS, naval radio stations, until they were commissioned in 1955. The round uniform cap tally read HMCS STADACONA for those stationed at Albro Lake but I do not know what cap tally was worn at Aldergrove until the station received its commission.)

CKS HMCS AVALON, St. John's, Newfoundland (This was the shore establishment for the Senior Naval Officer in command. HMCS CABOT was the Reserve Naval Division at St. John's.)

CZB HMCS BERMUDA (This was a Radioman Special station. It became CFS, Canadian Forces Station BERMUDA on unification of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1968. This station was a Royal Navy monitoring station until the Canadian Navy took it over in 1963.)

CFF HMCS BYTOWN, Naval Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario

CFL HMCS CHURCHILL, Churchill, Manitoba (This was a Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special station from 1949 until it closed in 1968.)

CZW HMCS CORNWALLIS, Deep Brook, Nova Scotia (This was the new entry training base for all new enlisted members of the navy for many years, and was also the communications school where all Signalmen and Radioman received their training. The communications school was moved from Halifax around 1950 and was transferred to Esquimalt, British Columbia, at the time of unification of the Armed Forces in 1968. The dipole antenna for this station was mounted on two heavy steel towers of about fifty feet in height.)

CKT HMCS COVERDALE, Moncton, New Brunswick (This was a Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special station that closed in the 1970's. This station was assigned CGT in 1949 but was changed to CKT in 1953 or 1954. The operators were running the characters together and CGT became CQ.)

HMCS D'IBERVILLE, Quebec City, Quebec (This was a new entry base where those who were French were taught English and received their new entry training. I have not found the call sign to this base. There was something about the graduates of this base that made the Canadian Navy special. They went from this base to the various trade schools in the navy with the rest of us. I do not know

what it was but whatever it was they were born with it. They were a wonderful bunch to work and sail with.)

- CGV** HMCS GANDER, Gander, Newfoundland (This was a Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special station. This station was assigned the CGV call sign when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949.)
- CGI** HMCS GLOUCESTER, Ottawa, Ontario (This was the Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special school and headquarters until it closed in 1972.)
- CKI** HMCS HOCHELAGA, Montreal, Quebec (This was the supply school for the cook, steward, storesmen, administrative writer and pay writer trades.)
- CFV** HMCS INUVIK, Inuvik, North West Territories (This was another communicator supplementary and radioman special station that was moved to Inuvik from Aklavik, North West Territories, on March 12th, 1961. The CFV call sign was assigned to Aklavik and moved to Inuvik with the station.)
- CFS** HMCS MASSET, Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia (This was a communicator supplementary and radioman special station. This station was never commissioned so did not become HMCS MASSET.)
- CKR and CGN** HMCS NADEN, Esquimalt, British Columbia (The West Coast main naval base that was the sister to HMCS STADACONA, the East Coast main naval base. CKR would retransmit the broadcasts from CKN for receiving practice for any radiomen in a position to receive the transmissions. I have no knowledge of station CGN.)
- CFD** HMCS SHEARWATER, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (The main naval air station when the Canadian navy had an air force.)
- CZS** HMCS SHELburne, Shelburne, Nova Scotia (This was a joint United States Navy and Royal Canadian Navy oceanographic station.)
- CKB and CGQ** HMCS STADACONA, Halifax, Nova Scotia (This was the main naval base on the East Coast and the sister of HMCS NADEN on the West Coast. CKB would retransmit old perforated tapes from the CFH broadcasts. This was done on a two-megahertz frequency, from 2000 to 2100 kilohertz (2012 kilohertz in the 1970's), and was for receiving practice for any of the radiomen in a position to copy the transmission. I do not have any knowledge of station CGQ.)
- HMCS VENTURE**, Esquimalt, British Columbia. (This was the Junior Naval Officer Training Establishment. I have not found a call sign assigned to this establishment.)

One can see there were quite a few of these stations over the years. These lists should bring back many fond memories to those who had the pleasure of working these stations. The main, and in the majority of cases the only station in use on these stations was the Canadian Marconi CM11 station. The coast station version of the shipboard CM11 station was known as the TM11 transmitter because it did not have a CSR5 receiver mounted in the same cabinet. These stations were connected to a dipole antenna arrangement. These reserve naval divisions were the local recruiting office for the regular navy and had a few regular navy personnel on staff, including radiomen. These stations did not get much use but they were there and ready to go if they were required. CKN and CFH were very big stations with probably the most powerful transmitters in service in Canada. Some of the smaller stations may have had a transmitter as large as the Canadian Marconi PV500. HMCS GLOUCESTER had a PV500 that was used as an amateur radio transmitter with call sign VE3GLO.

The following stations used a PV500 Transmitter:

CFL CHURCHILL

CGI	GLOUCESTER
CKT	COVERDALE
CFV	AKLAVIK
CGV	GANDER
CFS	MASSET
CFI	FROBISHER had a fire in 1954 and then used a borrowed RCAF AT-3 Transmitter.

THE FRIGATES

Canada had a number of larger naval vessels in addition to the naval fleet described thus far. Soon after the famous Corvettes entered service, it was decided to improve the basic design of these ships. With the installation of new equipment, they had become very cramped. This improvement involved a new design of these famous ships that were proving themselves time and again as a most effective weapon against the German U-boat. This new design was a larger ship, one with twin-screws (propellers) and two engines. When they first came out they were called a Twin Screw Corvette. This was soon changed to a River Class Frigate and again many were named for the various towns across Canada. The British named their copies of this ship after their rivers and this is where the River Class originated. The Royal Canadian Navy had seventy of these and sixty were built in this country. The seventy were:

----	1944-1945	HMS ANNAN
CGJC	1944-1945	ANTIGONISH
CGJJ	1944-1946	BEACON HILL
CZDZ	1944-1945	BUCKINGHAM
CGKZ	1944-1945	CAP DE LA MADELEINE
CYTY	1943-1945	CAPE BRETON
CGKY	1944-1945	CAPILANO
CGLG	1944-1945	CARLPLACE
CGVY	1944-1945	CHARLOTTETOWN
CYTR	1944-1945	CHEBOGUE
CGLL	1944-1945	COATICOOK
CGKC	1943-1945	DUNVER
CGNC	1944-1945	EASTVIEW
GBJH	1944-1945	HMS ETTRICK
CGWY	1944-1945	FORT ERIE
CGNG	1944-1945	GLACE BAY
CGXX	1943-1945	GROU
CGPB	1944-1945	HALLOWELL
CGQG	1944-1945	INCH ARRAN
CGRC	1944-1945	JOLIETTE
CYTZ	1944-1945	KIRKLAND LAKE
CGRR	1944-1945	KOKANEE
CGWV	1944-1945	LA HULLOISE
CGWX	1944-1945	LANARK
CGWG	1944-1945	LASALLE
CGWZ	1944-1945	LAUZON
CGNT	1944-1945	LEVIS
----	1944-1945	HMS LOCH ACHANALT
MWRB	1944-1945	HMS LOCH ALVIE
----	1944-1945	HMS LOCH MORLICH
CGZZ	1944-1945	LONGUEUIL
CYTF	1944	MAGOG (served 8 months)
CGXG	1943-1945	MATANE
GGMW	1944-1945	HMS MEON
----	1944-1945	HMS MONNOW

CGJR	1943-1945	MONTREAL
----	1944-1945	HMS NENE
CYTP	1943-1945	NEW GLASGOW
CYTQ	1944-1945	NEW WATERFORD
CYTJ	1944-1945	ORKNEY
CGXZ	1943-1945	OUTREMONT
CYTL	1944-1945	PENETANG
CYTM	1943-1945	PORT COLBORNE
CYTK	1944-1945	POUNDMAKER
CGKX	1944-1945	PRESTONIAN
CGXF	1943-1945	PRINCE RUPERT
----	1944-1945	HMS RIBBLE
CYTT	1944-1945	ROYALMOUNT
CYVV	1944-1945	RUNNYMEDE
CGLS	1943-1945	ST. CATHERINES
CGTC	1944-1945	STE THERESE
CGYB	1943-1945	SAINT JOHN
CYZC	1944-1945	ST. PIERRE
CYZY	1944-1945	ST. STEPHEN
CYVL	1944-1945	SEA CLIFF
CYTS	1944-1945	SPRINGHILL
CYWW	1944-1945	STETTLER
CYWY	1944-1945	STONE TOWN
CGBQ	1943-1945	STORMONT
CYXX	1944-1945	STRATHADAM
CZDD	1944-1945	SUSSEXVALE
CYRF	1943-1945	SWANSEA
----	1944-1945	HMS TEME
CYZZ	1944-1945	THETFORD MINES
CYZW	1944-1945	TORONTO
CGXN	1943-1944	VALLEYFIELD (sunk on May 7 th , 1944)
CZDK	1944-1945	VICTORIAVILLE
CGQJ	1943-1945	WASKESIU
CYTN	1943-1945	WENTWORTH

Like the older Corvette, these seventy frigates were used mainly in ocean escort, escorting convoys of merchant ships back and forth across the Atlantic. One can see that some were not commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy and remained part of the Royal Navy. Since I have included photographs of HMCS PRINCE RUPERT, it is only fitting that I give a brief account of her contribution to the war effort. She, like each of the other sixty-nine, was 301 feet 6 inches long, 36 feet 7 inches wide, and had a draft of 14 feet 4 inches with a standard displacement of 1,445 tons. Her full speed was only 19 knots, rather slow compared to a destroyer, but was most effective. The armament on these Frigates varied somewhat from one to the other, but PRINCE RUPERT had one four-inch gun forward and a twelve-pounder aft. She carried depth charges and hedgehog for use against German U-boats.



Canadian Armed Forces CN3669

HMCS PRINCE RUPERT



Canadian Armed Forces CN3641

HMCS PRINCE RUPERT

HMCS PRINCE RUPERT commenced and terminated her naval career at Esquimalt, British Columbia. She was constructed by Yarrow's Limited and was laid down on August 1st, 1942, launched on March 3rd, 1943, and commissioned on August 30th, 1943. After three weeks of training she visited her namesake, the town of Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and remained there overnight. On September 30th, 1943, she sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia, and arrived here on October 21st, 1943. The photograph of her Radio Room

was taken the next day, October 22nd. After a further period of training and fitting of additional gear, she sailed in Escort Group C-3 escorting Convoy SC-150 on January 3rd, 1944, from St. John's, Newfoundland.

March 13th, 1944, found HMCS PRINCE RUPERT on her second westbound convoy. She detached from this convoy on that date to join in an action against a U-boat and took part in the kill of the U-boat, sharing the honours with USS HAVERFIELD, USS HOBSON, two British Coastal Command, and three American carrier-borne aircraft.

She continued with Escort Group C-3, on the Newfoundland to Londonderry, Ireland, run until November 11th, 1944, when she reported to Liverpool, Nova Scotia, for refit. She had two weeks of exercises at Bermuda following further work at Shelburne and Halifax after her refit. She then joined Escort Group EG-27 at Halifax on April 12th, 1945, for the remaining month of the war in the Atlantic. On May 24th, 1945, she and HMCS DUNVER returned to Yarrow's Limited, Esquimalt, British Columbia, where she was to be tropicalized. It should be noted that HMCS DUNVER was named for Verdun, Quebec. The Royal Navy had HMS VERDUN so the name was reversed. This was done to prevent any confusion between the two. This tropicalization work on HMCS PRINCE RUPERT was terminated after VJ-day and on January 16th, 1946, she was handed over to the War Assets Corporation for disposal.



Public Archives Canada DND HS-0262-1

This is the Radio Room in HMCS PRINCE RUPERT on October 22nd, 1943.

The radio operators in HMCS PRINCE RUPERT must have had some merry old rides in her but this station to me is the ideal layout. The Receivers, starting from the back of the Radio Room working towards you, are: two SMR-3's an FR-12, and just a slim portion of the corner of an MSL-5. All this equipment is Canadian Marconi and the transmitter just behind the operating positions is an early model of the famous PV-500. Note the large fuse panel. There would be no standing on your head and feeling around in the dark

trying to check these. With a simple continuity meter you could check them all while comfortably seated in the operating position. Everything very neat and compact and the smell of the plywood would be a welcome warm feeling. The two brass telegraph keys permanently secured to the operating desk had a beautiful movement. Although I do not know the history of these keys, I believe they were constructed in Canada for the Marconi Company. If not, they may have come from the Signal Company of Boston, Massachusetts. The wooden rectangular piping above the operating position is a forced air ventilator. Most, if not all, of these seventy frigates had a Radio Room identical to this, which resembled the Radio Room in each Corvette.

The United States built ninety-eight of these frigates and called them a Patrol Frigate giving them a pendant number with a PF prefix. The first two USS ASHEVILLE PF1 and USS NATCHEZ PF2 were built here in Canada. USS HALLOWEL PF72 through to USS PROWSE PF92, were built at Providence, Rhode Island and all twenty-one were turned over to the Royal Navy on completion. These twenty-one were known as the Colony Class in the Royal Navy and were named after British colonies. They were HMS ANGUILLA K500 through to HMS ZANZIBAR K596 inclusive. All twenty-one were returned to the United States in 1946. These ninety-eight Patrol Frigates were the basis of the United States large Destroyer Escort program. They were a very interesting vessel. There were quite a few of these frigates used as weather ships both during the war and afterwards.

THE DESTROYERS

The next largest vessel in the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet was the Destroyer. These were the larger fighting ships of our Navy. They were not assigned the normal escort duties of the Corvettes and Frigates, except in the capacity of the ship in command of a convoy therefore each had a most interesting career during the war that is a separate story in itself. In addition to the six with which we entered the war, we had an additional twenty-one as follow:

1943-1945	ALGONQUIN	CZJX
1940-1945	ANNAPOLIS	CGNJ
1939-1945	ASSINIBOINE	CGDF
1943-1944	ATHABASKAN	CGWM
1943-1945	CHAUDIERE	CZJK
1940-1945	COLUMBIA	CGNK
1943-1945	GATINEAU	CGXC
1943-1945	HAIDA	CGDK
1941-1945	HAMILTON	CGBM
1943-1945	HURON	CGXY
1942-1945	IROQUOIS	CZGD
1943-1945	KOOTENAY	CGQC
1940	MARGAREE	----
1940-1944	NIAGRA	CGNL
1943-1945	OTTAWA	CGRG
1944-1945	QU'APPELLE	CZJL
1940-1945	ST. CLAIR	CGNM
1940-1943	ST. CROIX	CGNP
1940-1945	ST. FRANCIS	CGNQ
1943-1945	SASKATCHEWAN	CGVV
1944-1945	SIOUX	CZJY

This made for a total Destroyer fleet of twenty-seven during the war. At the end of the war, in 1945, we acquired another four as follow:

CRESCENT	CZCC
CRUSADER	CGJG
MICMAC	CYVN

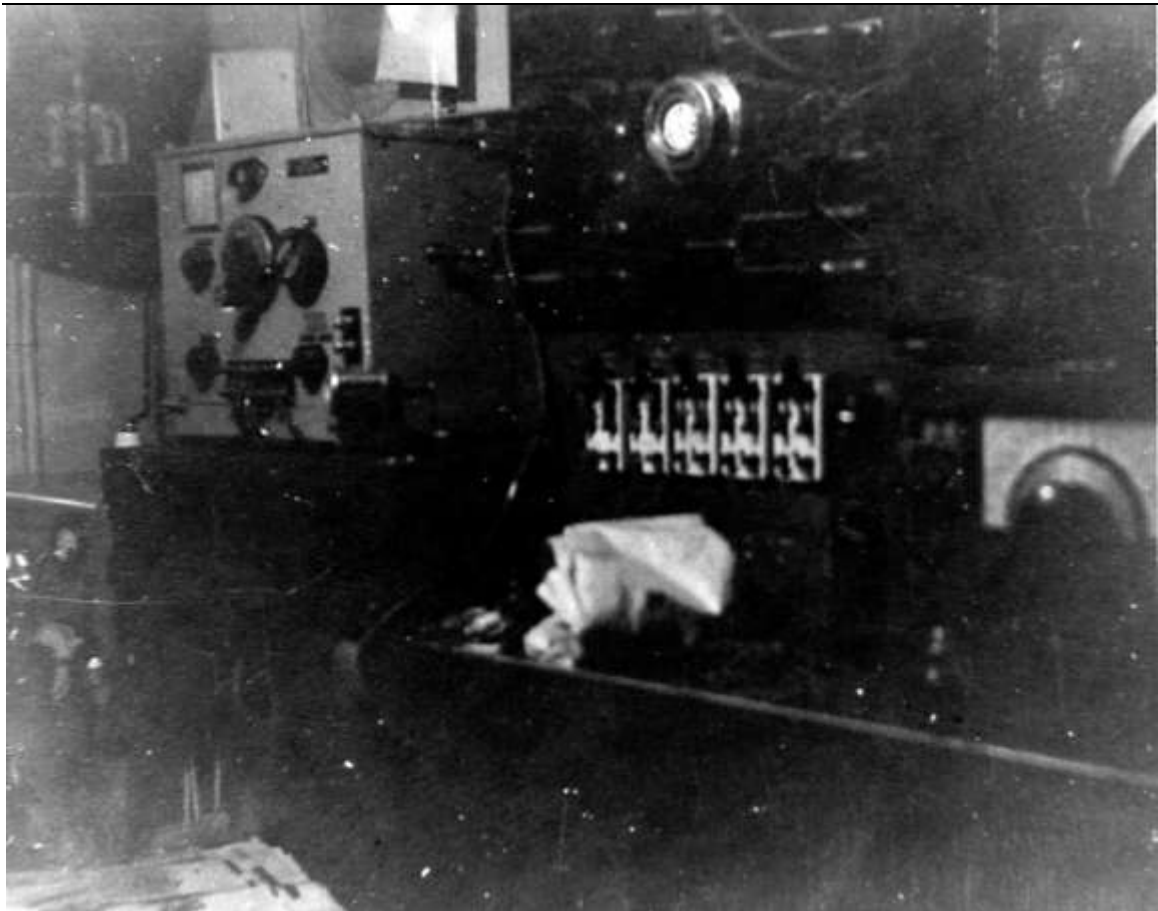
NOOTKA CZJS

These four did not participate in the war as Canadian but brought the overall total up to thirty-one for that period.

These destroyers were divided into two classes. The Tribal Class was named for the various first nation Indian Tribes throughout the country. The River Class was named for the various rivers throughout the country, with the exception of HMCS HAMILTON who would have been a River Class had she not served a while in the Royal Navy and retained her name when she became a Canadian ship.

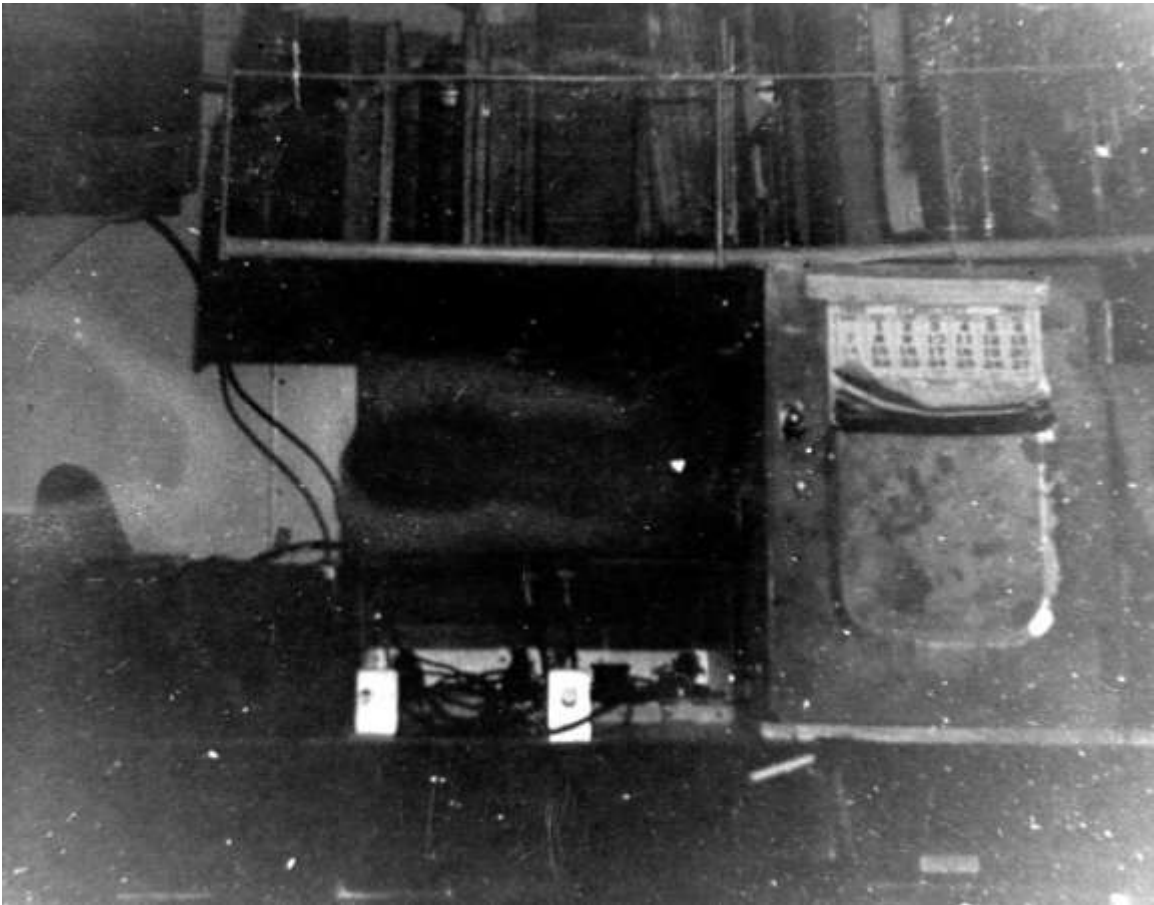
These ships, as were all the larger warships, equipped with several radio rooms. Seven of these were part of the fifty destroyers built by the United States Navy for World War I and given to Britain in exchange for bases within her territories. These seven were ANNAPOLIS, COLUMBIA, NIAGRA, ST. CLAIR, ST. CROIX, ST. FRANCIS, and HAMILTON. All of these would have had identical radio rooms and the main high frequency transmitter was a TBL-5. A few photographs of one of the radio rooms in HMCS ST. CLAIR appear below.

HMCS QU'APPELLE was one of six that were overage Royal Navy fleet destroyers. The other five were KOOTENAY, SASKATCHEWAN, GATINEAU, CHAUDIERE, and OTTAWA to replace the original OTTAWA that had been sunk by the enemy on September 13th, 1942, with a loss of five officers and 109 men. The QU'APPELLE's main radio room consisted of an R.C.A. type 89-transmitter that was capable of 500 watts. Her radio room consisted of three bays containing emergency Royal Navy Receivers and a FR-12. QU'APPELLE, as well as the others, was equipped with very high frequency equipment and both medium and high frequency direction finders in various radio rooms throughout the ship.



L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is a portion of the radio equipment in HMCS ST. CLAIR in 1942.



L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is a corner of the radio room in HMCS ST. CLAIR in 1942 and the photo is not good but someone may get something from it.



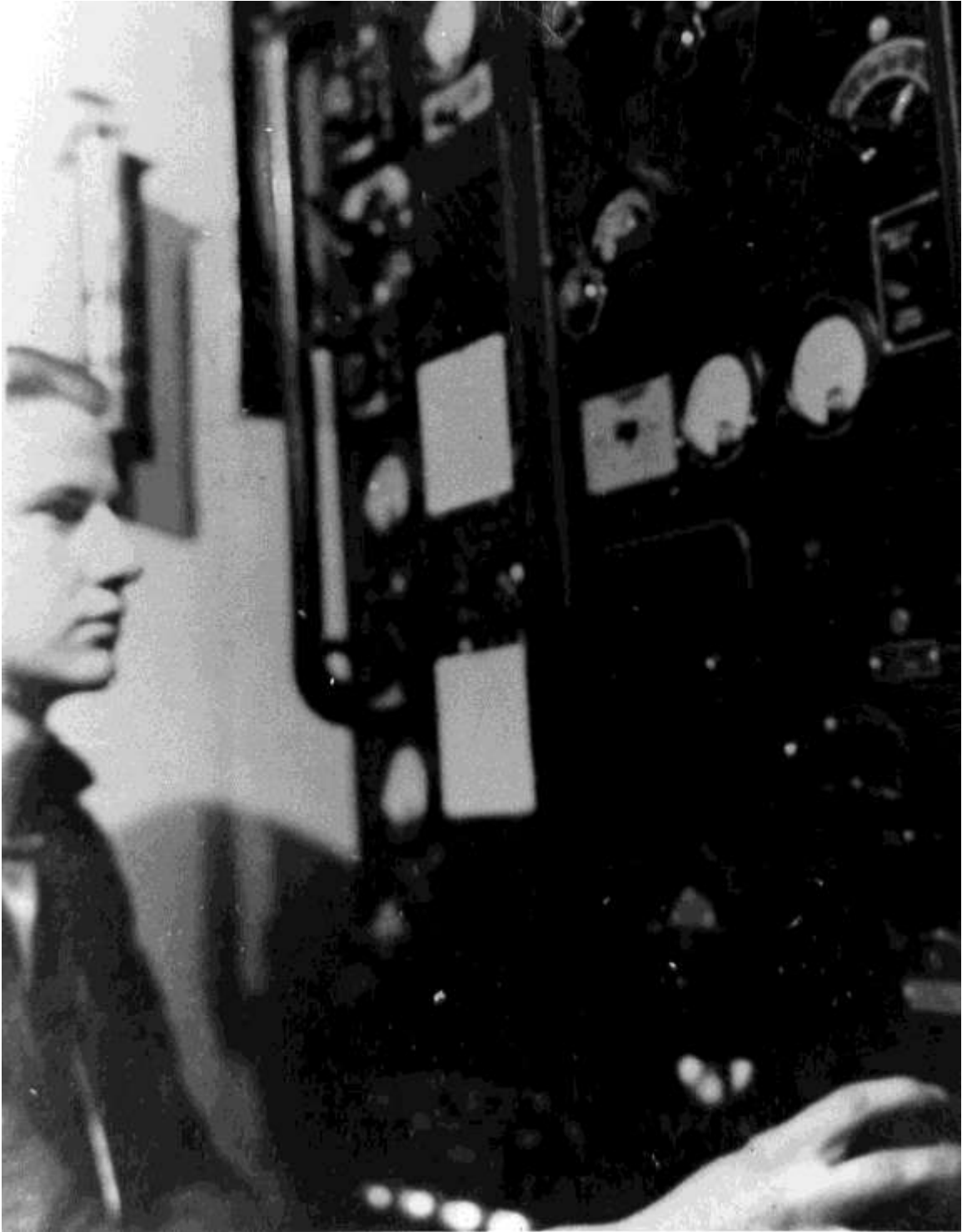
L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is Leading Telegraphist H. Strand tuning one of the American made transmitters in HMCS ST. CLAIR in 1942.



L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is Leading Telegraphist H. Strand on duty in HMCS ST. CLAIR in February 1942.



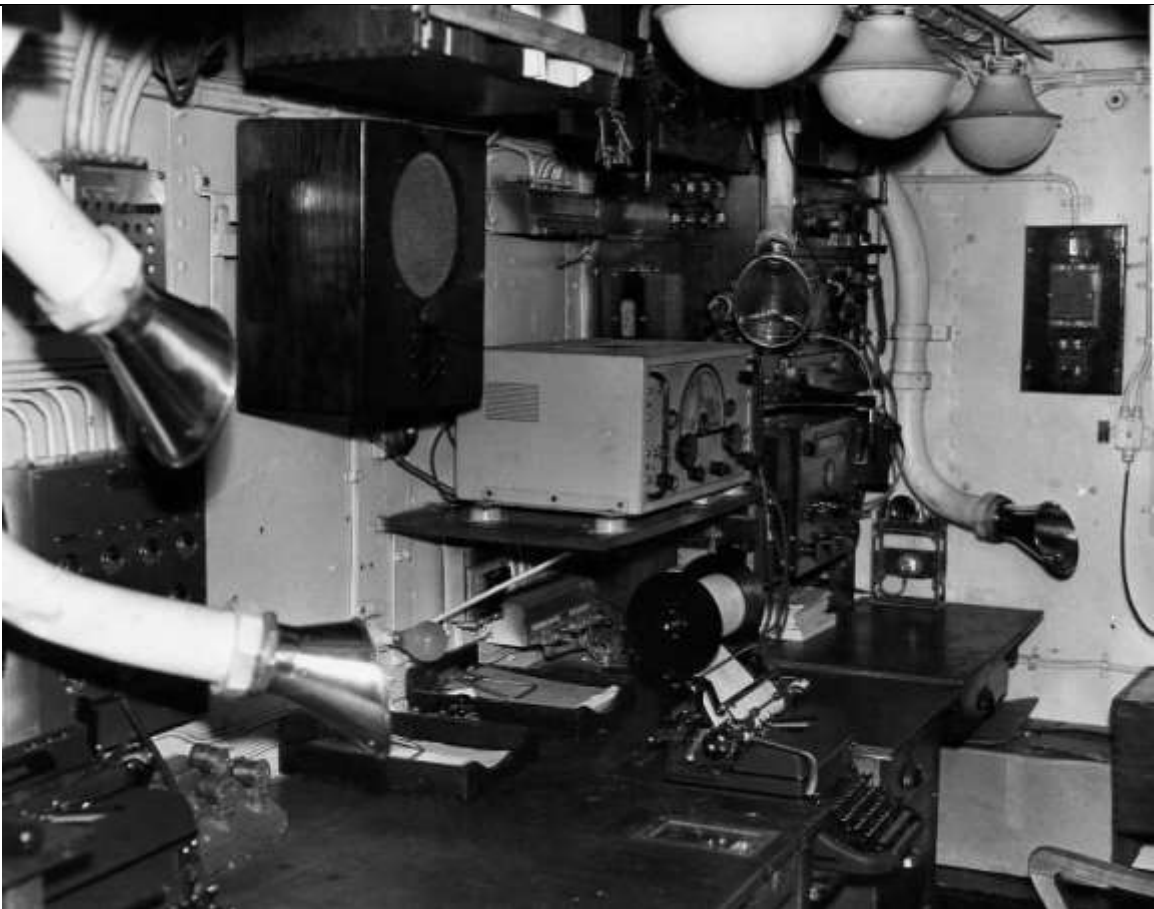
L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is Leading Telegraphist H. Strand on duty in HMCS ST. CLAIR in February 1942.



Public Archives Canada PA-114379

This is HMCS ALGONQUIN in October 1944.



Public Archives Canada HS-1533-1

This is the W/T Office looking aft in HMCS ALGONQUIN on July 31st, 1945. One can get more detail on the equipment shown here by visiting the web site of Jerry Proc VE3FAB.

The ALGONQUIN and SIOUX were the former Royal Navy Fleet Destroyers VALENTINE and VIXEN and were commissioned in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1944. The only equipment I was able to identify in the photograph of one of ALGONQUIN's radio rooms that appears here and was taken on July 31st, 1945, is the Canadian Marconi CSR-5 Receiver. This receiver became a very popular receiver and was part of the CM-11 unit. This unit combined both a transmitter and receiver (CSR-5) and was installed in many vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy fleet. This photograph indicates that this equipment was mostly British, coming with her when transferred, but this must have been her main radio operations position. Notice the four voice pipes. The Navy was set up in order to do most anything via radiotelegraph including the firing of the guns. A preparatory signal was first transmitted and then the operators stood by for the actual signal to fire, at which point they hung on and yelled. With all these voice pipes, everyone including the duty cook "got the word".

HMCS ASSINIBOINE was the former HMS KEMPENFELT and acquired from the Royal Navy at the beginning of the war, arriving in Halifax on November 17th, 1939, and proceeding on convoy duty the next day. Her original name was in memory of Admiral Kempfenfelt, who was one to make an attempt at constructing a communications system within the Navy about 1780.

HMCS MARGAREE was the former HMS DIANA and had a short career with the Royal Canadian Navy. On her first trip, October 20th, 1940, during a storm she was in collision with a merchant ship, the PORT FAIRY, of the convoy she was trying to protect and escort. The ship, her commanding officer, and 141 of her crew were lost.

HMCS's ATHABASKAN, HAIDA, HURON, and IROQUOIS were four powerful Tribal Destroyers built in England especially for Canada. IROQUOIS was the first and was commissioned late in 1942 and the other three arrived in 1943. The Royal Navy had a number of these destroyers all named for various native tribes throughout the Commonwealth.

THE CRUISERS AND AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

The remainder of the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet consisted of four large ships during the war:
Two Cruisers:

UGANDA	CZCK
ONTARIO	CZCF

Two Aircraft Escort Carriers that remained Royal Navy, but had complete Canadian Navy crews except for the air branch. Those who maintained and operated the aircraft were Royal Navy:

[HMS NABOB](#)
[HMS PUNCHER](#)

These four had numerous radio rooms capable of transmitting on any frequency throughout the radio spectrum up to the very high frequencies.

So many of the commercial radio operators in this country have started as naval operators that I am sure this World War II Royal Canadian Navy fleet is familiar to them all.



Public Archives Canada F-3165

HMS PUNCHER

CONVOY BX-141

The Camperdown station VCS was to participate in the action, involving an attacked convoy during the closing months of World War II in the Atlantic. On January 12th, 1945, minesweeper HMCS WESTMOUNT passed the Boston Gate Vessel outbound at fifty minutes past noon Nova Scotia time, with the minesweeper HMCS NIPIGON in company. By 5:47 PM WESTMOUNT had convoy BX-141 formed up and moving out towards its destination, Halifax. Lieutenant R. L. B. Hunter, RCNVR, was in command of WESTMOUNT and was also convoy commander. These two minesweepers were to be assisted with this convoy by Escort Group EG-27, the same group PRINCE RUPERT would join in three months. EG-27 at this time consisted of the three Frigates, MEON (as Senior Ship), COATICOOK, and ETTRICK.

The convoy radiotelephone frequency was 2110 kilocycles or kilohertz in today's terminology. All the ships in every convoy used this same frequency.



Public Archive Canada PA114516

HMCS WESTMOUNT and HMCS NIPIGON were Bangor Class Minesweepers and HMCS KENTVILLE was a sister of these two. This is a photograph of HMCS KENTVILLE taken after the war in 1954.

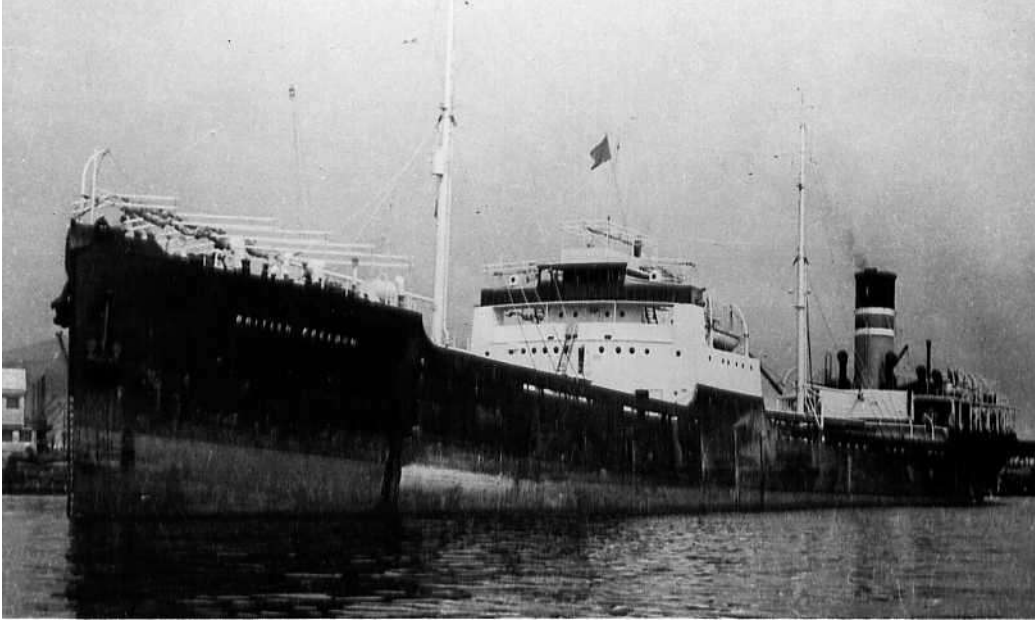
It should be noted that this convoy system of escorting merchant ships across the various oceans of the world originated back when man first started moving goods by ships. Apparently the Spanish were the ones who created the name convoy. They perfected this system a long time ago, while transporting the vast fortunes they removed from Central America over many years to the home country of Spain. The basic principle of the convoy system is to have all merchant ships within the convoy to be protected formed in uniform ranks. These uniform ranks of merchant ships then proceed along a prearranged course to their destination, with a number of warships patrolling around the perimeter of the convoy or ranks of merchant ships. Naturally the speed of any convoy is only as fast as the slowest ship within the convoy.

During World War II the Royal Canadian Navy became a perfectly geared machine for escorting these convoys from various points around our coasts and across the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these large convoys were designated SC followed by a number. The SC stood for Slow Convoy, meaning they were moving as slow as the slowest ship, but these ships were much slower than most. Many were built before World War I. There were fast convoys containing ships capable of around fifteen knots, and besides these two types of convoys, there were ships that were considered sufficiently fast to travel unescorted, letting their speed act as a form of protection.

Convoy BX-141 was to travel at 7.5 knots, meaning the slowest ship in the convoy was capable of maintaining no more than 7.5 knots. The BX stood for Boston to Halifax. The number 141 meant that this was the 141st convoy on this route and twenty merchant ships were being escorted to Halifax to go to anchor in Bedford Basin and then form up with a much larger convoy to be escorted across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom.

Three of the twenty merchant ships in convoy BX-141 were the American Liberty Ship MARTIN VAN BUREN, and the British tankers BRITISH FREEDOM and ATHEL VIKING. MARTIN VAN BUREN was the newest ship of the three and less than two years old. She was much the same size as the other two

measuring 7176 gross tons, one of 2,742 Liberty Ships that were mass-produced by the United States for this war. She was owned by the American Government through their War Shipping Administration and was operated by the West India Steamship Company. She had joined convoy BX-141 loaded with an Army cargo of provisions, locomotives, and vehicles, and had on board a regular wartime crew consisting of forty-one merchant seamen. She also carried a United States Navy complement of 27 men. The ship was under the command of forty-four year old Captain James H. Hiss from New York. The naval component of her crew, mainly gunners and their assistants, was in the charge of Lieutenant (Jg) Joseph M. Dollens, USNR. Chief Radio Officer Edward Bloomenthal from Philadelphia was in charge of her radio room. His assistant was Heromer Arato from Arkansas and the two of them were to operate the radio station around the clock for this voyage.



World Ship Photo Library

BRITISH FREEDOM



World Ship Photo Library

ATHEL VIKING



National Archives Washington 80-G-289655

This is the SS MARTIN VAN BUREN on November 1st, 1944, in position 3655N 7515W, enroute to join Convoy BX-141

ATHEL VIKING was a tanker that had been built in 1926. Actually she had been built as a bulk molasses carrier, one of a series of twelve built for United Molasses Company Limited (Athel Tanker Lines) of London, England. She was 8779 gross tons with twin screws (two propellers) and was capable of a speed of 11 knots. She had a wartime complement of fifty-one men under the command of Captain Egerton G. B. Martin. Her Chief Radio Officer was forty-eight year old W. E. Mitchell, who held a second class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, and his two assistants, with special wartime certificates, were A. G. Stark as second, and A. Whatley as third.

BRITISH FREEDOM was a tanker of 6984 gross tons that had been built in 1928 for the BP Oil Company. Earlier in the war, in 1942, BRITISH FREEDOM had been torpedoed in position 3445N 7522W, but survived this to be repaired and sail again. Albert Hawling joined her as Chief Radio Officer just before D-day and expected to be in this invasion, but that was not to be. They came over to New York for another load of crude oil and back to Scapa Flow, and then spent a period on the East Coast of the United Kingdom hauling gasoline up and down that area and the Thames River. The crew did not mind when told they were to come back over to New York in late 1944, because the advent of newer weapons within the German arsenal meant the coast over around their home was not as safe as it had been.

BRITISH FREEDOM had an uneventful but very rough passage on this trip to New York. She encountered rain, snow, and gales the entire trip, but on Christmas Eve 1944 arrived at New York, taking all of thirty days to make the run. After Christmas and when the cargo had been loaded, she was to sail from Boston in convoy to Halifax. Because BRITISH FREEDOM could not reach Boston until the day before this convoy was due to sail, Second Officer K. C. McConnell and Chief Radio Officer Bert Hawling were sent to Boston to attend this convoy conference and obtain their instructions and orders for same. This was not to be and McConnell and Hawling joined the ship at the Cape Cod Canal to await the following convoy, BX-141. These BX convoys operated between Boston and Halifax and they were assembled in Buzzard's Bay, went through the Cape Cod Canal and then formed up in Cape Cod Bay ready to sail to Halifax. This waiting proved to be a rather cold experience for all the ships of this convoy. Ice formed around the ships

and on the ships, freezing the falls (lines) supporting the lifeboats to the point these boats were frozen in their davits.

BRITISH FREEDOM was under the command of Captain M. L. Morris, and as was the procedure in British ships, Bert Hawling had two assistants. W. J. Stewart was second and J. Hendry was third. Bert held a first class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, whereas Stewart and Hendry held the wartime Special Class Certificates. In theory these two were capable of receiving signals only with a limited knowledge of the actual operation of the equipment. They were capable, or should have been, of operating the equipment in an emergency.

Convoy BX-141

11	21	31	41	51	61	71	81
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	22	32	42	52	62	72	82
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	33	43	53	63			
	X	X	X	X			

January 1945

Convoy Identification YD

Convoy Escorts the Minesweepers HMCS WESTMOUNT (Convoy Commander) and HMCS NIPIGON. These two were assisted by Escort Group EG-27 consisting of the Frigates HMCS MEON, HMCS COATICOOK, and HMCS ETTRICK.

The merchant ships in this convoy were strung out in eight columns per the above diagram. All convoys were formed up in this fashion with the numbers being used to form their pendants number. For example, the number across the top of the line became the first digit of their pendants number and their position below this number made the second or suffix of the pendants number. The American Liberty Ship MARTIN VAN BUREN was pendants number 71 in Convoy BX-141, placing her in position seven over from the left hand side and in the top row of the merchant ships. This pendant number became her permanent number while part of this convoy and was used in communications. In addition to this she was assigned the standard coded call sign consisting of two letters, a digit, and a two-letter suffix. MARTIN VAN BUREN also had her international call sign KVFJ. Therefore she had three call signs or means of identification while a member of this convoy. The other nineteen ships were also in the same position, and had three distinct means of identification.

Within every convoy there was a Convoy Commodore and Rear Commodore. Every ship in the convoy flew every flag signal made by the Commodore. These convoys took up several square miles of the ocean's surface as they passed so a ship on the left column would not likely be able to see one on the right during conditions of good visibility. During times of poor visibility one ship would likely see only the ships next to her. This is the reason all ships were required to repeat every visual signal made by the Commodore. The majority of these merchant ships carried naval personnel and a convoy Commodore was an officer in that department. The convoy Commodore was often a retired Naval Officer recalled for the duration of the war. He would choose an appropriate ship, along with a staff of several naval personnel, and make the necessary decisions and orders as they arose. This ship always was in the front center of these ranks flying either pendants 41 or 51 in a convoy the size of BX-141. I did not learn the name or pendant's number of the Commodore's ship in convoy BX-141. The Rear Commodore kept up to date with the convoy's progress and in the event the Commodore's ship dropped out of the convoy for any reason, he would immediately

take over command of the convoy. The Liberty Ship MARTIN VAN BUREN was Rear Commodore in Convoy BX-141.

The naval ships performing the actual patrols and protection around the convoys had their Senior Officer under whom they worked, and he worked with the convoy Commodore in order to see the convoy safely along its route. Naturally the officers involved in the overall picture were experienced officers but the rank of any given officer as held in the Navy had nothing to do with who was in command at any given time. If for example one ship developed defects in a portion of her equipment, she immediately relinquished command to a ship better equipped. These were the cogs of a precision instrument that not only worked, worked very well.

Once the twenty merchant ships off Boston on January 12th, 1945 had formed up in this formation, they became Convoy BX-141 and commenced steaming along at 7.5 knots per orders towards Halifax. The two minesweepers kept patrolling around the convoy keeping a sharp lookout both above and below the surface of the ocean. At 2:12 AM January 13th the first ship of EG-27, HMCS ETTRICK joined the convoy and was assigned her position to patrol. At 7:45 AM NIPIGON reported to WESTMOUNT that her radar had broken down and she was not able to repair it. In the meantime the weather had gotten warmer de-icing the ships in the convoy, but an overcast condition threatening a storm began to form behind the convoy. At 9:40 AM merchant ship with pendants 32 stopped with engine trouble and NIPIGON was ordered to stop and stand by her until she managed to get going again, and then she was to rejoin the convoy at her best speed. At 7:24 PM the two remaining Frigates of Escort Group EG-27 joined the convoy and were assigned their patrol sections known as screening positions. The next morning Lt. Hunter ordered "cat-gear" to be strung out behind the naval escort vessels about four miles from the Sambro Light Vessel at 8:41 AM January 14th, 1945. This "cat-gear" was a device towed by a ship that made a lot of noise well away from the stern of the ship. Acoustic torpedoes were the major menace at this time and these torpedoes homed in on the sound of a ship's propeller thrashing through the water. The first of this "cat-gear" equipment had been developed from experiments with the Fairmile Motor Launches. At the time this cat-gear was being strung out, the convoy was breaking down from the eight lines into a single line for entering Halifax.

Although pendants number 32 managed to get her engine going at 2:30 PM and was broken down for only five hours, NIPIGON was unable to catch up with the convoy by the time they were forming in line to enter Halifax. WESTMOUNT passed the Sambro Light Vessel at 9:45 AM on January 14th, 1945 and at 10:00 AM altered course and took up station astern of the convoy leaving the Frigates to pass the convoy on through the cleared channel QJA254 to Halifax. (Everything was numbered and named in true military fashion. This all makes sense and makes for an easy and fast means of identification). 10:30 AM found WESTMOUNT screening astern of the convoy.

The weather is always a major factor in any of our activities. If the ship or her equipment break down repairs can be made. If the crew is not what they should be they can be replaced; but there is nothing that can be done to change the weather.

The weather of course played a big part in the outcome of many of the battles fought throughout history. Hitler's last great effort to break the allied offensive, during World War II occurred in the Ardennes Forest just before the Allies could cross the river Rhine. This took place in December 1944 and Hitler not only made the plans he nearly succeeded in breaking through the allied lines. For this reason submarines U-1053, U-870, U-1009, and U-1232 had been sent out to various positions around the North Atlantic to act as weather stations. The only effective tool we have against the weather is to try to predict the conditions at any given time and plan accordingly. These four U-boats recorded the actual weather conditions in their assigned areas and radioed this information back to Germany, in order for the German forecasters to predict the weather for this attempt at breaking through the line in the Ardennes Forest.

U-1232 was under the command of Captain Dobratz. On completion of this weather assignment he proceeded to the approaches of Halifax in order to raise hell with the shipping coming in and out of the port.



C. R. Spracklin

This is the operating position at the Hartlen Point Monitoring Station in 1956. This was a radio monitoring station located across the approaches to Halifax Harbour from Camperdown Radio for many years. This station played an important role in monitoring German U-Boat radio transmissions during World War II.

The largest operational U-boat the German Navy used during the war was the type IX D/2. This boat could perform a variety of tasks and one was known as that of a “Milch Cow”. The main U-boat attacking our convoys was the type VII, but this boat had a limited range and had to rely on the larger supply submarines for extra fuel, fresh-water, food, and nearly everything, including crew changes. The type IX was not only the supply boat but was an effective long-range fighter. She carried upwards of twenty-four torpedoes with six torpedo tubes, or could act as a long-distance minelayer. It was one of these that laid the mine in the approaches to Halifax that HMC ML053 collected on June 8th, 1943.

U-1232 was a type IX C, not as large as the IX D, but a large submarine for her day at about 1180 tons. The IX D/2 was the larger at 1616 tons and this type, the IX, varied from 1000 to 1600 tons. U-1232 was using the acoustic torpedo this trip. That meant that Capt. Dobratz could come into the approaches of Halifax and lie on the bottom if he wanted and just pick the ships off as they came in or out of the harbour. One of the first victims of this type of torpedo was HMCS ST. CROIX on September 20th, 1943.

The escorts of BX-141 were towing their cat-gear, the noisemakers to protect themselves from these acoustic torpedoes, but the merchant ships were unprotected and this was due mainly to the device, like the submarine nets they carried, slowing them down. The merchant ship had power sufficient only to move through the water at a reasonable speed. With the towing of any additional gear, it slowed her down to the point that she seldom used anything to protect herself and was more willing to rely on luck.

The radio operators on duty in the various radio rooms throughout Convoy BX-141 were experiencing a routine run. They were maintaining their normal radio watches and listening to 500-khz and making the necessary log entries of signals heard that has been the lot of sea-going radio operators for years. They heard Lantana Radio WOE, in Florida, New York Radio WNY, Amagansett Radio WSL, on Long Island, New York, all call the customary CQ at their traffic list times and terminate this call with QRU. (This International “Q Code” means I have nothing for you.) Our Canadian coast stations were heard to call each other now and then but for what reason I do not know. Possibly this was just to give the ships, which were under radio silence, some signals to tune in, in order for them to know they were listening to the proper frequency. At 6:37 AM the merchant ships in Convoy BX-141 copied the BAMS (Broadcast to Allied Merchant Shipping) Broadcast from Glace Bay Radio. They felt this would be a normal routine wartime voyage with little but the regular broadcasts to copy.

The naval operators were kept busy copying every transmission made from their assigned frequency at the fairly new and powerful station with transmitters at Newport, Nova Scotia. As they started to form their single line formation to enter Halifax, although everyone in each ship was kept busy performing his duties, they all began to feel they were going to terminate with a routine successful run. But Herr Dobratz, the uninvited welcoming committee, was listening and mumbling "gotcha" or whatever it was a German mumbled before firing torpedoes. As he fired these torpedoes BRITISH FREEDOM was proceeding past buoy number one in the swept channel and coming up to buoy number two. She took the first torpedo in her stern as the thing had been designed, at 10:32. Bert Hawling and his two assistants were in the radio room cleaning up and doing some routine maintenance before arriving. The bridge was busy forming up this single line and getting ready to take on board the pilot. When the torpedo exploded it made one hell of a bang, and by the time Bert looked outside through slots in the armour, things looked bad. In no time at all the sea was lapping over the after tank tops. MARTIN VAN BUREN was next ship behind BRITISH FREEDOM and when Captain Hiss witnessed the explosion on the latter he immediately gave orders to swing out around to the right of BRITISH FREEDOM. As MARTIN VAN BUREN came up alongside BRITISH FREEDOM, Bert witnessed the explosion from a torpedo in her stern, at 10:40 AM, which sent up a great gush of water known as "the ghost". In this great gush of water were four naval gunners and considerable debris from the explosion. The four gunners were Andrew Como, Philip F. Giaquinto, Peter S. Percival, and Jimmy O. Mitchell. The only one of the four to survive was Jimmy Mitchell. He managed to swim to the starboard life raft that had been blown over with him and was rescued by HMCS COMOX.

When Captain Martin on the bridge of ATHEL VIKING witnessed these two stopped and torpedoed he gave orders to swing up along the left side of BRITISH FREEDOM. As ATHEL VIKING proceeded up alongside BRITISH FREEDOM she took a torpedo in her stern at 10:45 AM, bringing her to an abrupt stop alongside the other two. To anyone watching it would have appeared that mass confusion had taken over, but not so. All the cogs were starting to mesh at a faster rate. By this time the Navy was fully aware of all that had taken place, although from confusion within the reports being received, they had mistaken certain pendants for others, but they knew that three ships had been torpedoed. WESTMOUNT shifted Convoy Command to the Senior Officer of EG-27 (HMCS MEON) to save a duplication of orders and because EG-27 was in the area of the torpedoing, a better position to direct everything in general. In the meantime HMC Ships, COMOX, GASPE, NAPANEE, GODERICH, OAKVILLE, also STRATHADAM and BUCKINGHAM who were returning from Bermuda, all rushed to the scene as fast as they could and placed themselves under EG-27 to try and find U-1232 with hope of a kill.

Ed Bloomenthal in MARTIN VAN BUREN was the first to get off his distress call at 10:44 AM, one minute prior to ATHEL VIKING being torpedoed. He sent "SSSS (the distress signal of the time, indicating he had been attacked by a submarine) and he signed YD71, the convoy identification and her pendants number.



John Wheaton

This is one of the last unaltered Liberty Ships, SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, at her permanent berth Pier 3 East, Fort Mason, in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, California. Jeremiah O'Brien was a Privateer Captain who lived at Machias, Maine, during the American Revolutionary War.



John Wheaton

This is the Radio Room in SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN that was assigned international call sign KXCH. The radio installation is the RCA model 4U.



Spurgeon G. Roscoe

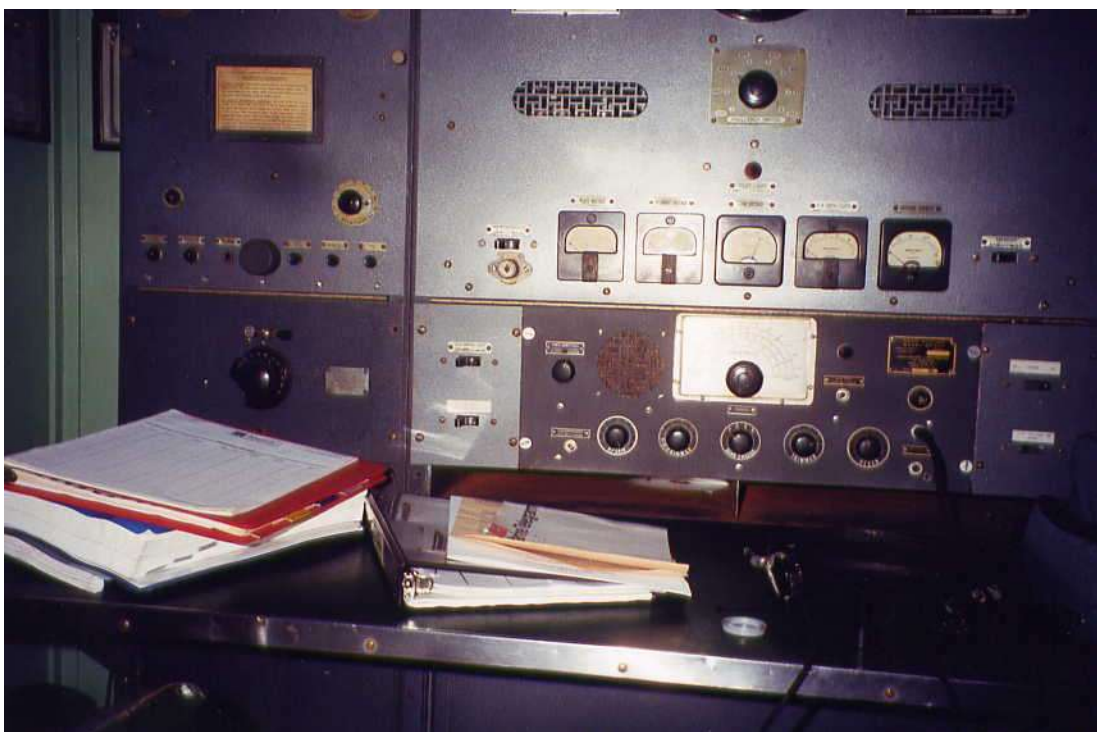
These are some photographs I took of the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN with international call sign KHJL on August 25th, 2000 while alongside at Halifax, Nova Scotia. I spent over four hours explaining her radio room and station to any and all that wanted to listen while touring this vessel.



Spurgeon G. Roscoe VE1BC



Spurgeon G. Roscoe



Spurgeon G. Roscoe



Spurgeon G. Roscoe



Spurgeon G. Roscoe



Spurgeon G. Roscoe

There were five Distress Signals in use during World War II as follow:

Class of Distress	Distress Signal	When Used
Warship Raider	R R R R (separate letters made 3 times)	On sighting, or when attacked by an enemy warship.
Armed Merchant Ship Raider	Q Q Q Q (separate letters made 3 times)	On sighting, or when attacked by an armed merchant ship raider.
Submarine or mine	S S S S (separate letters made 3 times)	On sighting, or when attacked by a submarine or on striking a mine.

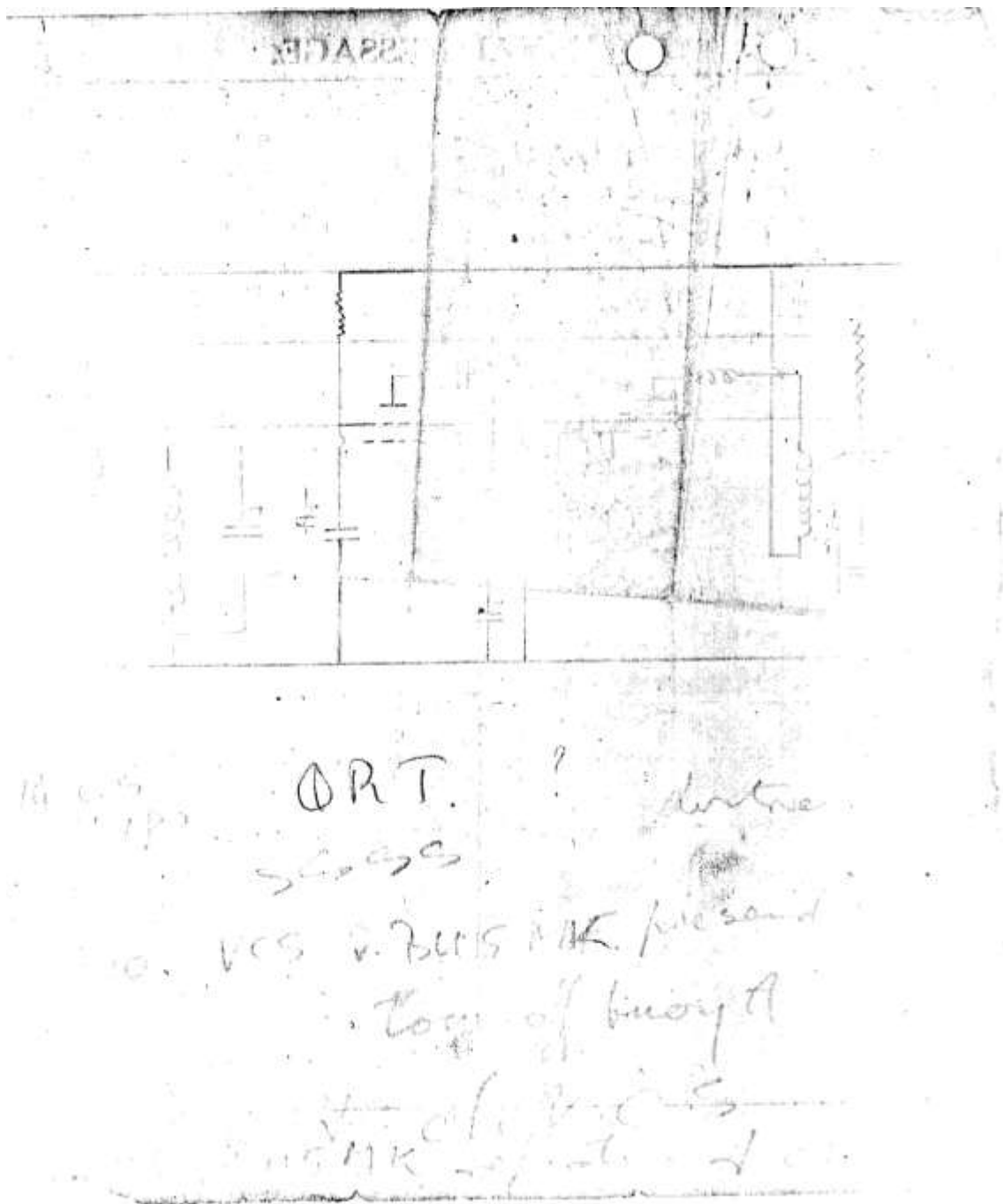
Aircraft	A A A A (separate letters made 3 times)	When attacked by aircraft.
International	S O S (separate letters made 3 times)	When in distress and immediate danger from cause not due to enemy action.

An actual message would look like the following:

Transmitted	Meaning
CT	Attention
R R R R R R R R R R R R R R	Warship raider
DE	From
KH8FD KH8FD KH8FD	Your own war radio call sign (3 times).
4410N 6202W	Position: Lat 4410N Long 6202W
SUSPICIOUS	Indicates presence of suspicious and unidentified warship.
081430Z	Date-time group (if time permits).
AR	End of message.

BRITISH FREEDOM's Electrician thirty-three year old W. Henderson was down in the engine room and was killed instantly when the torpedo exploded. This explosion blew the skylights (windows in the roof of the engine room) up into the air. The fourth engineer, twenty-three year old Richard Cleland was on watch in the engine room but had gone up into the boiler room with his duty greaser to couple up the oil fired boiler for use in place of the main engine exhaust gas boiler normally used at sea. Rick Cleland was temporarily blinded by the explosion and was led out on deck. Thinking the blast was some error on his part in changing over the boilers, he was apologizing to all that could hear him. Both he and the duty greaser were fortunate they had not been at their normal duty station, the engine controls, or they would have been killed instantly.

BRITISH FREEDOM lost her main ship's electrical power when the torpedo exploded. This meant Bert had to switch to his battery supply with only a dim light for the radio room. In his haste he grabbed the schematic diagram of a simple broadcast receiver he had drawn, for the ship's radio log and kept a brief record of his communications with station VCS on this. He had been planning to build this broadcast receiver from spares and used parts.



This old photo copy of Bert's schematic come radio log is quite faded after nearly thirty years in my file.

Captain Morris told Bert to send his distress call and message. Since BRITISH FREEDOM was no longer a part of the convoy he reverted to his coded call, rather than his pendants number, and sent "SSSS v BU5MK PLEASE SEND TUG FOR TOW OFF BUOY A". The duty operators at Camperdown VCS were doing their best to answer these calls, pass along the necessary requests, and record the bearings taken from the direction finder. ATHEL VIKING called in at one minute to eleven with her report, following Bert's transmission.

Bert had been running back and forth between the radio room and the bridge and at one point he and Captain Morris placed the confidential books plus the Aldis (Signal) Lamp Battery for luck, in their perforated steel box, and tossed it over the side into the sea. This steel box was for that purpose. Captain Morris ordered most of the crew away leaving one lifeboat on the starboard side of the bridge. There were about twelve left when Bert Hawling came down the bridge companionway and slipped on the boat deck. Captain Morris grabbed him as he slid for the open ship's side, and said jokingly, "No, not yet Sparks". Their position was hopeless. Bert had radioed for a tug, but if it had come it would have been of no use. They felt the ship shudder as probably the engine room bulkhead gave way and the bow rose higher. Captain Morris told the twelve remaining on board to get off. He, the Mate, the Chief Engineer, and the Bosun left in a life raft. Bert and the remaining eight left in the last lifeboat. Bert's boat was on the weather side of the ship and was rather difficult to get clear. When they pulled clear of **BRITISH FREEDOM** the life raft, containing Captain Morris, appeared miles away and going like a rocket. Bert's boat went around astern of the ship through a large patch of oil. The funnel was now under the water and Bert could see into his cabin that opened aft on the Bridge Deck. He could see his personal belongings falling out the open door and his cane wicker chair fell out into the sea while he was watching. Captain Morris had a small dog that had its box outside the Captain's door and enjoyed going about the ship riding in the Captain's uniform jacket with his head sticking out the open part of the front. This little dog went ashore with the Captain in the life raft and on arrival in Halifax managed to make the local newspapers as an Andulusean Greyhound. Captain Morris gave him to the crew of a Hudson Bay Company ship that was in Halifax at the time.



H. H. MacLean

This is the Hudson's Bay Company Supply Vessel MV FORT ROSS at Hebron, Labrador in July 1942

This was the second torpedoing for both **BRITISH FREEDOM** and Bert Hawling. Bert had been a passenger in the Dutch vessel **SOEKABOEMI** bound to relieve another radio operator in India. **SOEKABOEMI** was part of Convoy ONS-154, the convoy that nearly died in December 1942. Bert was landed in Halifax from this incident and instead of being sent on to India, was sent across Canada to take delivery of a new "Sam Boat" being built for the British government on the west coast.

One of the four Basset Class Minesweepers, HMCS GASPE, was to be the rescuer of the BRITISH FREEDOM crew and her log entries are:

1120 No. 1 buoy, BRITISH FREEDOM sinking. Bearing app. 1000 yds. From No. 1 Buoy. Standing by to pick up survivors. All guns crews closed up. Action stations

1125 Picked up 1st lifeboat

1133 Picked up 2nd lifeboat

1135 Picked up 3rd lifeboat

1143 Picked up 4th lifeboat

1147 Picked up raft

Total of survivors picked up from BRITISH FREEDOM:
56. Lifeboats cut adrift. Proceeded into harbour

1202 BRITISH FREEDOM down stern first, only focastle above water

HMCS GASPE had lain well clear of BRITISH FREEDOM and made her lifeboat crew row a good distance because they had spotted the thirty depth charges carried on her Bridge Deck. Had these thirty depth charges exploded while BRITISH FREEDOM sank, it would have destroyed GASPE had she been close by.

When the torpedo exploded in MARTIN VAN BUREN, it blew off the rudder, the propeller, the thrust bearing caps, and stopped the main engines. It caused a two-inch crack on both sides of number three hatch that went below the water line. The deck was bulged on the starboard (right) side between number four and number five hatches and the deck was cracked on the port (left) side of number five hatch. The shaft alley (a tunnel for the propeller shaft) flooded immediately. The watertight doors were closed but all were leaking.

One of the tugs from the famous Foundation fleet was soon at the scene of the torpedo attack. I did not learn whether she was sent there to stand by for this convoy or just happened to be in the area. But, FOUNDATION SECURITY took MARTIN VAN BUREN in tow at eleven o'clock just as the fire alarm system in the latter indicated a fire in the five-inch magazine (storage area for the ammunition for the large guns). Flood valves were opened to flood this magazine with water and this incident prompted Captain Hiss to give the order to abandon ship.

Abandonment was completed at ten minutes past eleven. HMCS COMOX picked up the crew from MARTIN VAN BUREN and her log reads:

1100 Action stations

1103 Away seaboats crew to pick survivors from water

1115 3 boat loads survivors taken on board from MARTIN VAN BUREN, 51 persons, 1 stretcher case

1355 Survivors landed

The stretcher case mentioned is Jimmy Mitchell who was blown off the five-inch gun on the stern. He managed to swim to the life raft, but made the rest of the trip to the hospital in a stretcher. Note this life raft in the photograph of MARTIN VAN BUREN proceeding to join this convoy. This life raft is lashed to the bandstand housing the small gun just forward of the five-inch gun on the stern.

According to the statements made by the MARTIN VAN BUREN survivors on reaching Halifax, the other vessel that rescued them was another Basset Class Minesweeper HMCS FUNDY, but FUNDY's Log shows she was not in the area and I was unable to learn the identity of this other vessel. MARTIN VAN BUREN had a crew of forty-one merchant seamen, twenty-seven U.S. Naval members, and one U.S. Army Security Officer, making a total of sixty-nine people on board. Three of these had been lost from the blast leaving a total of sixty-six survivors. Fourteen survivors are missing in the records available, but they were rescued which is what really matters.

WESTMOUNT had arrived at the scene of the torpedoing at eleven o'clock and she found MARTIN VAN BUREN and BRITISH FREEDOM, the latter in a sinking condition with only her bow (from the bridge forward) sticking out of the water, about one mile west on the number one buoy. But by this time the weather was very bad with the visibility less than three cables (1821.8 feet). She could not find ATHEL VIKING. When FOUNDATION SECURITY took MARTIN VAN BUREN in tow, she did not know the direction so WESTMOUNT gave them a course and proceeded ahead of them.

Meanwhile, at 10:52 AM HMCS ETTRICK had struck a submerged object near ATHEL VIKING. At the same time HMCS MEON reported hearing a torpedo pass near her going from west to east. The Navy had no other choice but try to kill this submarine before it did further damage, so ETTRICK and MEON carried out attacks on contacts between this swept channel and Blind Sisters Rocks.

The crew in ATHEL VIKING felt certain the ship would stay afloat providing they could get a tow into Halifax before long, so remained on board, and waited, and waited. At 3:23 PM ATHEL VIKING's Carpenter, J. W. Platt, and one of her Able Seamen, W. Strand, reported sighting a Submarine on the surface. A later diagnosis by the Navy of this sighting claimed this was a Fairmile and not a Submarine, because Fairmiles were operating in the area.

Third Radio Officer Al Whatley answered my query as follows:

"The reason that we were not picked up at a similar time to the crews of the BRITISH FREEDOM and the Liberty Ship was that we stayed aboard for about seven hours (I think) until given the order to abandon ship. We were told by VCS that tugs were on the way to us but they never arrived. From memory, there were three tugs sent from Halifax but they all went in the direction of the Liberty Ship. I wouldn't say that we were ignored but they certainly didn't find us. After seven hours we had developed a considerable list which meant that two of the lifeboats had swung inboard and were not useable leaving only two boats plus rafts serviceable.

I am not certain how the rescue vessel eventually found us but it could have been by the rather crude radar system of those days. This was a small R.C.N. sub-chaser which, on the return trip to Halifax, appeared to be more under the water than on top of it. I recall being violently sick on this short trip, the only time that I was sick during the whole of my time at sea. I also recall that the captain, who I think held the rank of Lieutenant, had only returned from leave that Sunday afternoon and had immediately put to sea either to search for us or the U-boat. There was some little mix-up about the code signals to get back through the boom defenses but after a while we met other ships of the same flotilla and went into Halifax with them."

When all the survivors of this convoy landed in Halifax, there was much bitterness among them towards the Royal Canadian Navy for the poor rescue attempt they appeared to show towards the ATHEL VIKING. With this information I tried to locate the log of the actual rescue vessel. Although it had been mentioned that the vessel may have been an R.C.A.F. rescue boat, Al's letter clearly indicates a Navy Fairmile. The Naval records show they were in the area from the report of a submarine sighting. The records I located on the Fairmiles gave me eight possibilities from this detail, mainly the Commanding Officer's recent return. The log for one of these eight, HMC ML112 is missing and none of the others were involved. Was HMC ML112 the source of Al's seasickness?

Four of the ATHEL VIKING crew were missing and believed drowned. The four were E. G. B. Martin, Master; G. Ince, Chief Officer; E. Caijssoe, Chief Steward; and A. J. McHale, Bosun. Oh yes, sorry, there was a fifth. It had been popular for the ships of that era to carry a mascot and the Chief Steward had a little

dog, a right independent little cuss. Some of the other fellows tried to grab him and take him ashore with them but this little dog was having no part of that. If his master wasn't leaving, neither was he, and he therefore became the fifth casualty.

Why were so many rescued and these four, sorry five, did not make it? Again I must refer to correspondence with Al Whatley who describes it better than I can.

"I recall that as the forward lifeboat was full, Captain Martin and the other three stayed aboard the 'Viking'. The idea being to get the majority to the rescue ship and then return to the 'Viking' to take them off – but before the lifeboat even reached the rescue ship the 'Viking' went down so the return trip was not necessary. I think that the rescue vessel searched around the area for a while but didn't find any survivors of the four on board.

One silly little thing that I do remember is that before leaving the wireless room I switched all the gear off – and then in the haste of leaving I left my favourite pipe in the ashtray on the operating table. You see, every minute we expected a tug to appear to take us in tow and it was a bit of a surprise when we got the order to abandon ship. As it so happened, we only just got off in time."

The following are copies of the ATHEL VIKING radio log.

BRITISH WIRELESS MARINE SERVICE.

Joint Service Department of:-
The Marconi International Marine Communication Co., Ltd., Radio Communication Co., Ltd.,
and Marconi Broadcasting Device Co., Ltd., Marconi House, Chelmsford.

WIRELESS LOG *S.S. M.V. ATHOL VIKING*

Call Sign *M3DL*

From *-* To *-*

Date *14 January 1945* Position *-*

Time (G.M.T.)		From	To	Particulars of Working	Wave Length	Distance
This Ship	Other Stations Working					
0605	WDE	CQ		=QRU=	600	
0610	WNY	CQ		=QRU=	"	
0630				All Quiet	"	
0645				S.P. observed	"	
0652	WSE	CQ		=QRU= QSY=	"	
0700				All off — 0700	"	
0715				S.P. observed	"	
0730				Quiet	"	
0745				S.P. observed	"	
0755	WSE	CQ		QRU	"	
0807	WSE	CQ		QRU	"	
0815				Quiet	"	
0825				Quiet	"	
0835				Vac. 6.5 V. N.	"	
0845	WSE	CQ		QRU	600	
0855				S.P. observed	600	
0905				Bi. R. VAS S.P. 505	2703	
0927	VAS	BANS		Rm - 1200g. Bepical (Reserve 600)	2703	
0947				2nd Element Maintained	"	
0955				S.P. observed	"	
1015	WNY	CQ		QRU	600	
1025				S.P. observed	"	
1040				DKK - 12 V. KETT	"	
1055				S.P. observed	"	
1105				Bi. R. VAS - 1200g. Bepical	2703	
1115				BANS - 1200g. Bepical	2703	
1125				S.P. observed	"	

0825		Quick	600
		VAS 6 V.D.	
0825	VSE	300	600
0825		SIP observed.	600
0830		Bi. Res VAS 1/2 S25	2703
0927	VAS	Res - 120000 (Reserve 600)	2703
1117		2nd Annual Maintenance	600
		SIP observed	600
1012	WNY	GRU	600
		SIP observed	600
1025		DICK - 10 KETT	600
		SIP observed	600
		Bi. Res 1000 - 100000	2709
0927		BANK 100000 100000	2709
		SIP observed	
		VAS 1000	
1025		SIP observed	
1200		VAS 1000 1000	

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Time (G.M.T.)		From	To	Particulars of Working	Way Leads	Distance
This Ship	Other Stations Working					
1205				RM off		600
1215				SP observed		600
1230				Quiet		
1237				RM off		600
1243				VAX clarks 082, 01WS		
1251				WSL cl. CO GRU		
1257				VCS cl. FINK 1100		
1300				CIVIC formation		
1302				RM off from 1243		
1323				WSL cl. 1100		
1327				VCS cl. CIVIC		
1330				VAN cl. 1100 12A AM		
1344	YD71			YD71 1100 12A AM		600
1351				VCS cl. CO 1100 12A AM		
1353				VAX 1100 12A AM		
1401				VCS acknowledged		600
1407				1100 12A AM		
1409				1100 12A AM		
1500				RM off		
1521	VCS	CO		= QUM with caution 1520Z		600
1526	VCS	CO		= QTC = MW5UT 141107 = QSW41		"
1552	WSL	CO		= GRU =		"
1557	WSL			Line Signal Clock correct		"
1620	VCE	CO		hav. air		"
1631	VU	CO		hav. air		"
1640	VU	CO		Signal?		"
1641	VCS	CO		hav. air		"

1223			1223	Both ships engaged		
02				Both ships engaged		
1223				Both ships engaged		
27				VCS do 411V		
30				VAN do 021120 AM		
44	YD71			YD71 SSSS Torpedoes launched	600	
51				VCS do 021120 AM		
53				VAN do 021120 AM		
57				VCS do 021120 AM		
1407				VCS do 021120 AM		
09				VCS do 021120 AM		
1500				VCS do 021120 AM		
1501	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z	600	
1526	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1552	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1557	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1620	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1631	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1641	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1757	VCS	CG		= QUM with caution 1520Z		
1826				Sent SSSS Sub sighted bearing 270/4 miles		
1837				VCS Sent - Can keep ship afloat if tug		
1839	VCS			come immediately.		
				P.R.		

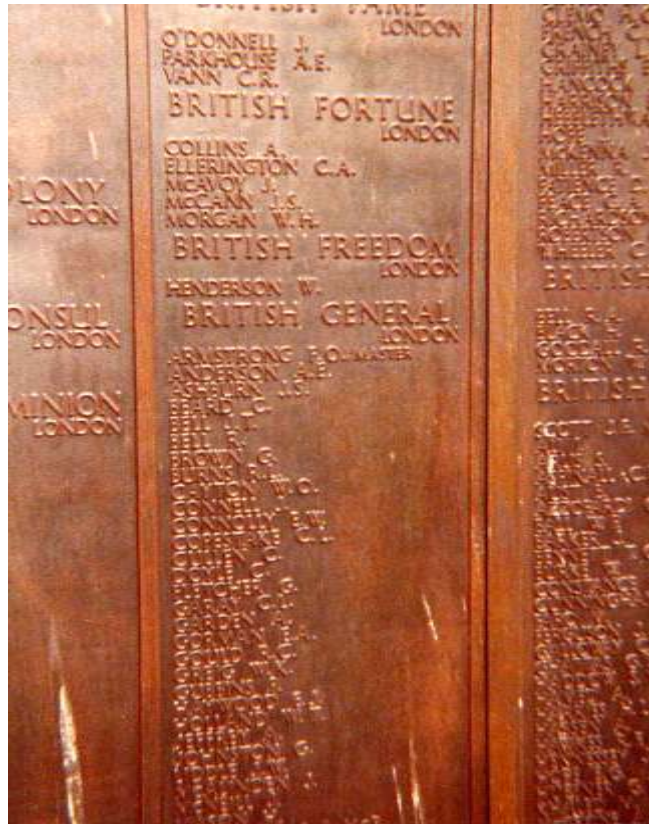
Meanwhile another item of interest had taken place. While FOUNDATION SECURITY was towing MARTIN VAN BUREN into Halifax she became disengaged. The records of the MARTIN VAN BUREN survivors made on arrival at Halifax, state the towline broke although those making this statement were not there to witness this. The local fishermen of the Sambro area swear the line between MARTIN VAN BUREN and FOUNDATION SECURITY was cut by a Navy Corvette coming in from Bermuda. They claim this corvette passed between FOUNDATION SECURITY and MARTIN VAN BUREN while this tow was in progress. Since these rumours have an uncanny way to be accurate lets take a look at the

records. First of all we have two Frigates inbound from Bermuda, HMCS BUCKINGHAM and HMCS STRATHADAM. These Frigates were nothing more than the deluxe model of the famous Corvette. Both these ships joined in the hunt for Herr Dobratz and his U-boat and quite conceivably one of these two could be the culprit. HMCS STRATHADAM's Log makes no mention of being the offender, but the question is left unanswered because the Log for HMCS BUCKINGHAM is missing and the logs of all the other naval ships make no mention of this broken towline. No one knows what became of the log of the tug FOUNDATION SECURITY. Why were these two logbooks (HMC ML112 and HMCS BUCKINGHAM) not available – were they used in some naval board of inquiry and never returned to their proper place? Their absence makes these questions all the more intriguing if nothing else.

Because of the deteriorating weather at the time, FOUNDATION SECURITY was unable to secure another towline on MARTIN VAN BUREN mainly because there was no one on board the latter to assist with this operation. The end result was that MARTIN VAN BUREN drifted ashore at Sandy Cove and as one fisherman told me, he has no idea how she managed this because it would take all he could do to get his small fishing vessel in there under the best of conditions. Naturally when a fully laden ship shows up with no one on board, the local residents have a tradition to uphold in the form of stripping the ship as soon as possible. Cyril Garrison replaced the engine in his fishing vessel with one from one of the Army trucks on board, and used this engine for many years. Around five thousand cases of an item called Fruit Cocktail found an immediate home in the basement of a vacant house. Possibly the reason this item was removed so rapidly and carefully is summed up in the statement made by the mother of a fourteen-year old boy. Her boy was to have no part in sampling the contents, although he had been one of the main removers, anything with cocktail in the name had to be booze of some kind. The local village stores nearly went broke. It was several years before they could so much as give anyone a package of cigarettes.

Captain Hiss learned shortly after his arrival in Halifax that his ship was still afloat and had drifted into Sandy Cove. He became rather concerned and wanted to get back on board as soon as possible, because in their haste to leave on receiving the signal of a fire in the magazine, they failed to dispose of the confidential books. He and a few others including the famous old salvage master of the tug FOUNDATION FRANKLIN fame, Captain Featherstone, went back aboard the BUREN the next afternoon. They found all the confidential books in order mainly because you cannot drink, eat, smoke, or fish with them. The MARTIN VAN BUREN had broken in two at the point she had cracked on the explosion of the torpedo when she grounded at Sandy Cove. As impossible as it seemed, Captain Featherstone managed to remove the two train locomotives that had been lashed on deck after the photograph was taken in November, and managed to set many of the vehicles ashore. These vehicles proceeded in convoy under their own power up the road past the old VCS station, that had done all she could to assist in this incident, and on into Halifax. The two locomotives were taken in by barge, one dangling on the end of the boom that had lifted her off the MARTIN VAN BUREN.

The search for U-1232 would continue by many pieces of naval equipment, including ships and anti-submarine aircraft for nine days. At fourteen minutes past midnight on January 23rd a submarine made radio contact with its headquarters in Germany from position 4300N 5200W, believed to be U-1232, the submarine that torpedoed Convoy BX-141. This prompted action on abandoning the search. U-1232 and Captain Dobratz were to survive World War II.



A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is a memorial in England with Mr. Henderson's name engraved on it.



A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is the same memorial as above with the names of those who lost their lives in ATHEL VIKING.

Mr. Martin Van Buren, as a point of interest, was the eighth president of the United States. If he left no mark anywhere else, he certainly left one to the local residents in the area of radio station VCS. Today there is little to show for what is left of the SS MARTIN VAN BUREN. An occasional severe storm will reveal a

rusty plate of her hull and many of those in the area claim the black scum on the rocks of the area is a remnant of the Bunker C fuel she carried to fuel her main engines.



Rex Garrison, Sambro, Nova Scotia

This is the MARTIN VAN BUREN wreck.



Nova Scotia Museum



Nova Scotia Museum



Nova Scotia Museum



Nova Scotia Museum

These are four more views of the wreck of the SS MARTIN VAN BUREN that are held at the Nova Scotia Museum.



Evelyn McCready

This is Mrs. Clyde Fleming and Evelyn McCready opening cases of contraband from the wreck of SS MARTIN VAN BUREN January 1945



A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is Bert Hawling's dog Cleo guarding his torch that is a flashlight in our world. These had to be the original "walkie talkie" because they had a key on them that one can see in the photo for transmitting Morse code via light. I enjoyed my correspondence with Bert and so many others very much and many thanks for all the help from all of you with this project.

TERMINATION OF WORLD WAR II

On the termination of World War II the "so called Electronic War" ended, but the changes made during this war were to make many changes in marine communications the world over. The Albion Lake – Newport Corner station (Halifax Radio CFH) was to continue in operation along the lines developed during this war. This station was a part of the British Commonwealth Scheme, the most enormous marine communications network ever to be constructed. The world's oceans were divided into various areas. A powerful high frequency coast station within the British Commonwealth countries, and within each area, was made controlling station of that area. Halifax Radio CFH became the controlling station for the Western North Atlantic. (Vancouver Radio CKN, a sister station to CFH, became the controlling station for the Eastern Pacific). After the war these controlling stations continued the practice of broadcasting a traffic list (a list of ships by alphabetical order of their call signs for messages on hand at each station) and after the transmission of this traffic list, a broadcast of these actual messages. This started during the war when ships did not use their radio transmitters because enemy ships and stations could tell their position via radio direction finders. This meant that each of these controlling British Commonwealth stations had a broadcast frequency for these broadcasts. All these controlling stations had the same working frequency in each band for any direct communication with any ship. In other words you could be calling Halifax Radio CFH4 and have Portishead Radio GKL, England, answer you and take your message(s). There was no additional charge involved in forwarding a message sent via one station or another. This made for a most efficient and simple (for the ship) means of communication. A ship could sail around the world with little trouble and nothing more than a medium frequency (500 kilohertz and a working frequency) transmitter.

The British are quite capable of producing and organizing some excellent equipment and organizations, but they seem different to the point of being awkward when doing anything average, or for the average person. This communications scheme was rather strange and confusing for anyone not familiar with it. The reason it was retained after the war was for the convenience of British ships. All any ship had to do was contact the closest British Commonwealth station with a TR message advising when it crossed from one area to another. (A TR message is a service message stating the ship's position, normally in nautical miles from a known geographical position and its next port of call.) Then the ship monitored the controlling station's

broadcasts. The ship could acknowledge receipt of any message received via a service message to the controlling station or any British Commonwealth station. In other words if the ship received a message from a CFH broadcast, she could acknowledge receipt via service message to CFH direct or send this message via Camperdown VCS, Sydney VCO, Montreal VFN, or any other commonwealth station including Portishead, England, Gibraltar, and so on.

To be truthful about it, I could never see the point of the scheme other than the fact it made it convenient for British ships to wander around with nothing but a medium frequency transmitter. Many who used this scheme became rather “gung ho” about it and felt it the only system by which to communicate. Why a coast station should have to know where a ship was bound or anything else about her made no sense to me. If a station had a message for a ship, list her in the traffic list and let her call in and collect the message. Why all the unnecessary chatter? But it was to be nearly twenty years before the British Commonwealth stations reverted to this very system, the one the American stations had used for years.

The call signs in use at each controlling station varied depending on the job. All the broadcasts at Halifax Radio were conducted with call sign CFH, but each working frequency had a number added to this call sign. CFH3 was the six-megahertz working frequency and this number varied depending on the frequency. All of these British Commonwealth controlling stations were the same with the exception of Portishead Radio in England. The Portishead Broadcasts used call sign GKA and the letter in the suffix changed depending on the working frequency. GKL was the eight-megahertz working frequency call sign. Whatever constituted the reasoning behind these various calls remains a mystery, but it was just another aspect of this system that took some time to learn and one more detail that had to be remembered.

There were many of these large controlling stations around the world and many smaller stations that were also members of this communications scheme. Every station in every British protectorate participated, and some that come to mind are, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Malta, Gibraltar, Jamaica, and Bermuda. These large controlling stations did not use the medium frequency band containing 500-khz and a working frequency, but any ship fitted only with a medium frequency transmitter could use any one of a number of such coast stations in every commonwealth country or colony. Since there were no additional charges involved this meant that a ship could send a message to Sydney, Australia, via Camperdown VCS for the same charge as sending it direct to Sydney Radio VIS, Australia. Since the overall majority of the shipping involved ships registered in Britain, these ships had neither the expense of installing good stations nor the expense of paying very much for the messages they transmitted at the expense of the commonwealth countries or colonies.

October 31, 2007

This is the Eighth Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

THE NAVY FLEET AFTER THE WAR

Germany, Italy and Japan trying to expand their borders created World War II. The western or allied countries were not prepared for this and had to put a stop to it as fast as possible before these three claimed the world. This involved two major details and the first was the construction of a fence to try to prevent this from going any farther. The second involved not only in keeping this fence in good repair, but pushing it back where it belonged. The one deed, which made this possible so quickly, was the production ingenuity of the American people, and the natural resources of the United States and Canada. Russia at this time was on our side for the simple reason she was on the opposite side of Germany. On termination of this war, World War II, the demobilization of this vast allied war machine was to take place.

What happened to each of the many ships we Canadians constructed and operated during this war is a question I have asked myself many times. Since these ships required so many trained radiotelegraph operators I have wondered where they all went. The first of these fleets I will attempt to describe was that of the Royal Canadian Navy, starting with the largest of these and working down to the smallest.

The two largest naval vessels during the war were the two British Escort Carriers, HMS NABOB and HMS PUNCHER and these were returned to the Royal Navy. NABOB was not in the best of shape when returned, due to the fact she was torpedoed on August 22nd, 1944, by U-354 off North Cape, killing twenty-one of her crew and injuring six others. She managed to limp home to the Firth of Forth and did not see service again during the war.



Public Archives Canada F-2080

HMS NABOB

These Escort Carriers were a design and construction project of the United States to provide flying protection for convoys. Not only would aircraft provide visibility for much greater distances, from the air you can see much farther below the surface of water than you can on the surface. The Royal Canadian

Navy did not have an Air Branch at this time, that is the reason these two Escort Carriers had British aircrews. Each of these two carriers carried about one thousand men and luckily more were not injured or killed during the torpedoing of NABOB.

These Escort Carriers were constructed from new merchant ship hulls known as the type C3-S-A1 at Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation, Tacoma, Washington. Nineteen of them were transferred from the United States Navy to Britain under lend-lease terms and all nineteen were further converted by Burrard Dry Dock Company, on the west coast, for the Royal Navy. Although these nineteen were new ships this conversion was necessary in order for the ships to operate under Royal Navy procedures. It was felt easier to convert the ships than retrain the men to operate under the U. S. Navy system. All nineteen were around ten thousand tons displacement and were capable of sixteen knots, carrying twenty aircraft each. They were 492 feet long overall by 69 ½ feet. They were of all steel construction except for the flight deck that was of wooden plank. Nearly all nineteen were returned to the United States on termination of the war. NABOB was originally the USS EDISTO and after the war was put up for sale. In 1952 she was purchased and towed to Bremen, Germany, and became the German freighter of the same name, NABOB, with German call sign DEBN.

HMS PUNCHER was the former USS WILLAPA and was converted to a freighter after the war. She was given several names over the years, first in 1948 as MUNCASTER CASTLE, second in 1954 as BARDIC, and was still listed in 1966 as the BENNEVIS under British registry with call sign GFMZ.

Another of these nineteen Escort Carriers deserves mentioning because Bob Minty, who retired from VCS, was one of her radio officers. USS WINJAH became HMS REAPER and on termination of the war became the British freighter, SOUTH AFRICA STAR with call sign GUAU. Bob served in her in the latter capacity sailing from the United Kingdom, via the Panama Canal to Australia and New Zealand, with the occasional visit to one of the West Coast United States ports. The GUAU radio room had the equipment laid out so that each component was mounted in its own case or cabinet on desks built in the radio room. The equipment was American, an ITT Mackay and an RCA Receiver mounted on a shelf just above the operating position, for that purpose. On the operator's left was the ITT Mackay medium frequency transmitter and on his right the high frequency transmitter, also ITT Mackay. The remainder of the equipment, the emergency installation, was mounted on a separate desk off out of the way. A most convenient station and one I always found more pleasant to operate and maintain. Bob states they had very few, if any problems with the equipment while he was on board. On this particular run he can remember having to rendezvous with another ship that had a sick crewmember on board who was transferred to SOUTH AFRICA STAR. This involved using their radio direction finder in order to make contact with each other. SOUTH AFRICA STAR carried a Doctor because of the fact her crew numbered over sixty.

While Bob was on this run, New Zealand Shipping had been disrupted in a strike of the London Dock employees, which made an interesting break for SOUTH AFRICA STAR. She was elected to stop over at Pitcairn Island with the mail, etc., that was normally carried by New Zealand Shipping. Bob claims he will always remember their stop at Pitcairn. There are no docks as such and the natives come out alongside any visiting vessel in their boats. One's first impression is that it would be impossible for a boat to come out because of the large surf. Not so, the natives hit these seas with all the fun a Pitcairn Islander seems to get out of life. These boats are tossed high into the air and come down practically out of sight in the troughs. All the while each occupant (including the women) is pulling hard on the oars. To add much colour to the picture each one is singing. The south sea natives love to sing. Having met some of them from my BOUNTY experience I can well understand why Bob will never forget his stop at Pitcairn. Such an experience as this was enough for First Mate Christensen to instigate a mutiny against Captain Bligh of the BOUNTY back in 1789.

THE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AFTER WORLD WAR II

After World War II the Royal Canadian Navy created a Naval Air Branch that was to have three Aircraft Carriers. These three were:

31	CZCL	WARRIOR
21	CZCD	MAGNIFICENT
22	CGLE	BONAVENTURE

Both Jim Cable and John Leightizer who served on the VCS station staff, served in BONAVENTURE as naval radiotelegraph operators (Radiomen).



Public Archives Canada PA-114454

HMCS BONAVENTURE off Belfast, Northern Ireland, October 8th, 1956

THE CRUISERS AFTER WORLD WAR II

The next largest naval vessels during the war were the two Cruisers UGANDA and ONTARIO. UGANDA was sent with British forces to the Pacific to give the United States Navy a hand in pushing their portion of the fence back towards Japan, during the last few months of the war. She was under the command of Commodore H. F. Pullen at this time, mentioned elsewhere on these pages as Rear Admiral, who has written some very interesting books on the subject of ships. The Canadian Navy planned a fleet of some sixty ships to operate in the Pacific, but UGANDA was the only one to see any action. UGANDA was renamed QUEBEC and served the R.C.N. until 1956. The other Cruiser, the ONTARIO, joined the R.C.N. in the spring of 1945, but the war ended before she actually joined the fleet in the Pacific. ONTARIO was to serve the R.C.N. until 1958.

31 & 66	CZCK	QUEBEC
32 & 53	CZCF	ONTARIO

THE DESTROYERS AFTER WORLD WAR II

The Destroyers were the next largest ship, in the Navy's fleet and a number of those that served during the war were to serve until the 1960's. These were as follow with their Pendant Number, International Call Sign, Name, and Radiotelephone Call:

213	CZJS	NOOTKA	"Sand Iron"
214	CYVN	MICMAC	"Hollywood"
215	CGJD	HAIDA	"King Cobra"
216	CGXY	HURON	"Jersey Bounce"
217	CZGD	IROQUOIS	"Jack Stone"

218	CGWN	CAYUGA	"Motorola"
219	CYWM	ATHABASKAN	"Night Letter"
224	CZJX	ALGONQUIN	"Open Road"
225	CZJY	SIOUX	"Throwback"
226	CZCC	CRESCENT	"Lost Angel"
228	CGJG	CRUSADER	"Lead Mine"

The present Canadian naval fleet is not listed for security reasons in the International Telecommunication Union Publications. They have not been listed since the 1959 List of Ship Stations. This makes little if any sense because they are the only fleet which religiously "make their number" while entering and leaving port. We radio operators needed to know these call signs, in order to properly communicate with them. For a while a Mr. C. C. Cox in the United States did a fine job in keeping us informed via his publication "List of Ships fitted with Radiotelegraph". He had the Canadian naval ships listed. The Destroyer Escorts known as the ST. Laurent Class were listed.

THE ST LAURENT CLASS DESTROYER ESCORTS

205	CGXG	ST LAURENT	"Bless"
206	CZFX	SAGUENAY	"Nymph"
207	CGWP	SKEENA	
229	CZCW	OTTAWA	"Charge"
230	CGNJ	MARGAREE	"Drowse"
233	CZFG	FRASER	"Shaft"
234	CGJL	ASSINIBOINE	"Kings Lady"
235	CZGJ	CHAUDIERE	"Snack"
236	CGWF	GATINEAU	
256	CGJI	ST CROIX	
257	CZDE	RESTIGOUCHE	"Route"
258	CGKG	KOOTENAY	
259	CZJV	TERRA NOVA	"Quill"
260	CGJR	COLUMBIA	
261	CGYZ	MACKENZIE	
262	CYRE	SASKATCHEWAN	
263	CYRO	YUKON	
264	CYQD	QU'APPELLE	
265	CGKB	ANNAPOLIS	"Argo"
266	CGZP	NIPIGON	"Night Ruler"

THE 280 CLASS DESTROYERS

The four 280 or Iroquois Class were listed in Mr. Cox's publication:

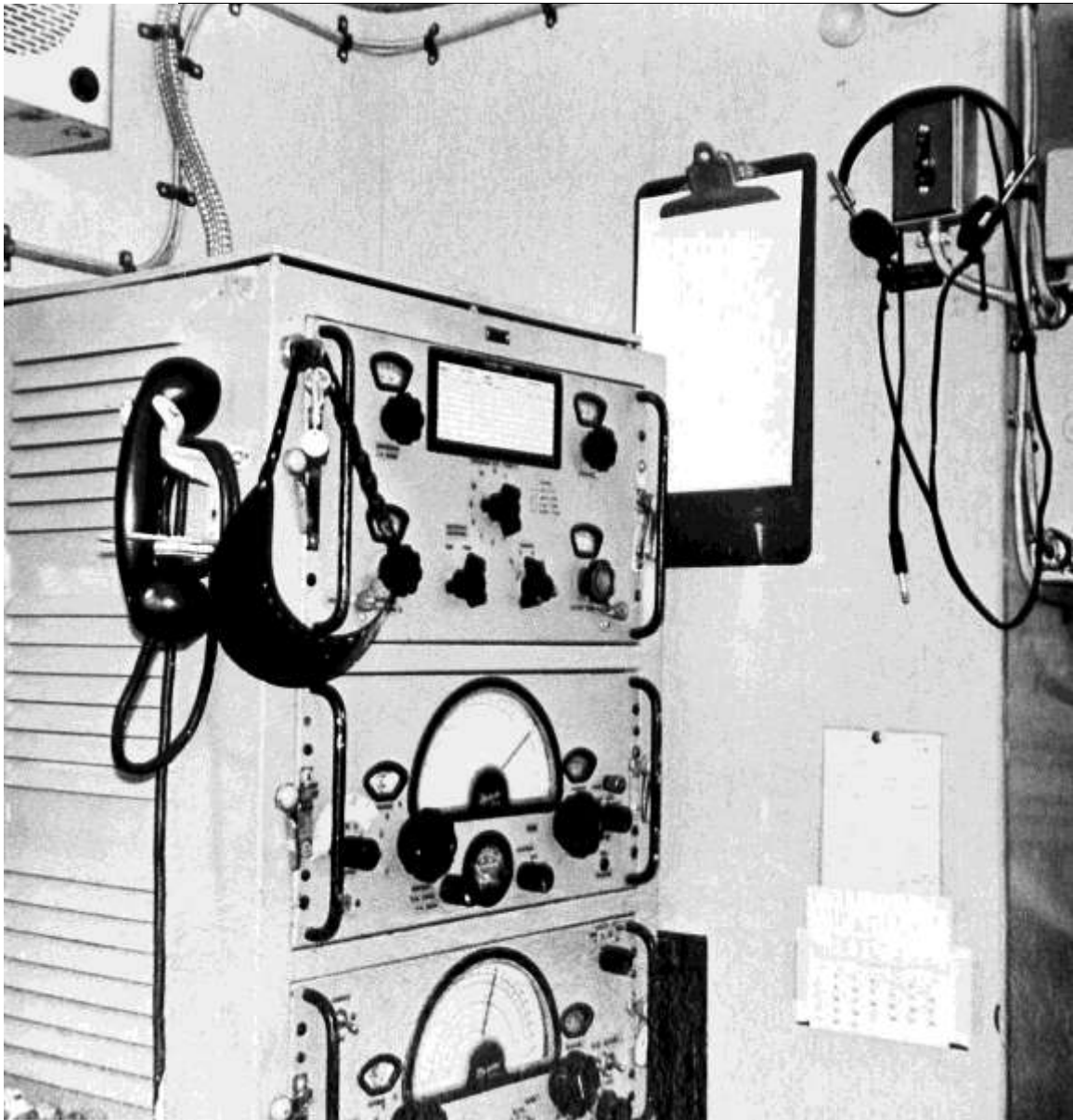
280	CZGD	IROQUOIS
281	CGXY	HURON
282	CYWM	ATHABASKAN
283	CZJX	ALGONQUIN

As can be seen these CY, CG, and CZ, prefixes stood out clearly from the other international prefix allotments to this country. If all the call signs had been issued randomly to all ships of every type they would hardly be noticed when heard over the air. At least anyone who had nothing better to do than keep track of a certain type of ship would have plenty on his mind in order to tell one from another. Now that they use satellite communications the naval radiomen probably do not know nor use these call signs. The signalmen use them via flag hoist.

THE CORVETTES AFTER WORLD WAR II

Although the Corvettes were the ships to make the Royal Canadian Navy during this war, they were made obsolete with the introduction of the Frigates. Therefore all but one of these Corvettes ended their career with the Navy on termination of World War II. The one retained was SACKVILLE. She served for many years in the naval auxiliary portion of their fleet with civilian crews. She served mainly as a research vessel and had her basic design altered several times. When her service was no longer required and she was headed for the scrap yard, some former naval members created a trust and saved her. They restored her to her original World War II configuration and have her as a museum at Halifax, Nova Scotia. SACKVILLE is one of the naval ships that retained her World War II call sign.

532 & 113 CGTJ SACKVILLE



Paul du Mesnil

The Canadian Marconi CM11 unit aboard CFAV SACKVILLE



Paul du Mesnil

This is Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil operating CGTJ on board the former corvette CFAV SACKVILLE. The unit at his elbow is the Canadian Marconi medium frequency direction finder MDF-5 and the radiotelephone is a Canadian Marconi transceiver.

THE FRIGATES AFTER WORLD WAR II

The Navy retained twenty-one of the seventy Frigates, and in 1953 HMCS PRESTONIAN was again commissioned in the Navy after being completely modified to the point you could hardly tell the River Class configuration. All twenty-one were to receive this modernization shortly after PRESTONIAN and they all became known as Prestonian Class Frigates. Some of these Prestonian Class Frigates were sold to foreign navies shortly after this conversion, but many remained with the R.C.N. Three of the seventy Frigates were converted to Department of Transport Weather Ships for Ocean Station "P" with call sign 4YP. These are shown with their D.O.T. call signs – the three with the CGG prefix.

301	CGJC		ANTIGONISH	"Event Z"
302	CYZY	CGGR	ST STEPHEN	"Defy M"
303	CGJJ		BEACON HILL	"Chapel W"
304	CYTQ		NEW WATERFORD	"Event D"
305	CGWV		LA HULLOISE	"Jigger L"
306	CYRF		SWANSEA	"Hoodlum J"
307	CGXC		PRESTONIAN	"Revival B"
308	CGLU		INCH ARRAN	"Bellamy M"
309	CGTC		STE THERESE	"Madeira S"
310	CGZV		OUTREMONT	"Ellsworth H"
311	CGLH		STETTLER	"Vicsburg M"
312	CGWB		FORT ERIE	"Abner W"
313	CZFM		SUSSEXVALE	"Calamity P"
314	CGZB		BUCKINGHAM	"Yearly T"
315	CYXF		NEW GLASGOW	"Madeira Q"
316	CYMD		PENETANG	"Abner V"
317	CZJM		CAP DE LA MADELEINE	"Wallop M"
318	CZJZ		JONQUIERE	"Fancy Ball L"
319	CZGL		TORONTO	"Retention L"
320	CGVF		VICTORIAVILLE	"Thunderbolt X"
321	CGRE		LANARK	"Suspender Y"
322	CYVH		LAUZON	"Engrave T"
323	CYWY	CGGP	STONE TOWN	
324	CGLS	CGGQ	ST CATHERINES	



Wright and Logan, Portsmouth, England

HMCS SWANSEA, fondly thought of as the family ship, because my uncle William A. Roscoe served in the engineering staff of this ship and was on board when the photo was taken off Swansea, Wales, in 1953. Seven years later I was assigned to the communications staff. Shortly after this photograph was taken SWANSEA was converted to the Prestonian Class.

These four letter international call signs listed above are the ones in use after World War II. Some of the call signs are their World War II call and others are not. For some reason some of the post war ships had their call changed.

These radiotelephone call codes were interesting. With the addition of the letter there could be 26 calls with the same prefix and these were used with the phonetic alphabet.

There were many phonetic alphabets in use over the years. The Army, Navy, Police, Amateur Radio, and so on each had one and they all were different. One was known as the city alphabet because each word in use was the name of some city.

The one that became standard, and may still be in use, is known as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) phonetic alphabet. The following is the official version one was to use in pronouncing each letter, figure and so on:

For the pronunciation of letters and figures by radiotelephony or by voice over a loud hailer:

Letter	Code Word	Pronunciation
A	ALPHA	AL FAH
B	BRAVO	BRAH VOH
C	CHARLIE	CHAR LEE (or SHAR LEE)
D	DELTA	DELL TAH
E	ECHO	ECK OH
F	FOXTROT	FOKS TROT
G	GOLF	GOLF
H	HOTEL	HOH TELL
I	INDIA	IN DEE AH
J	JULIET	JEW LEE ETT
K	KILO	KEY LOH
L	LIMA	LEE MAH
M	MIKE	MIKE
N	NOVEMBER	NO VEM BER
O	OSCAR	OSS CAH
P	PAPA	PAH PAH
Q	QUEBEC	KEH BECK
R	ROMEO	ROW ME OH
S	SIERRA	SEE AIR RAH
T	TANGO	TANG GO
U	UNIFORM	YOU NEE FORM (or OO NEE FORM)
V	VICTOR	VIK TAH
W	WHISKEY	WISS KEY
X	XRAY	ECKS RAY
Y	YANKEE	YANG KEY
Z	ZULU	ZOO LOO

Note: The **Boldfaced** syllables are emphasized.

In other words there could be 26 Abners, Abner Alpha through to Abner Zulu inclusive, Thunderbolt Alpha through to Thunderbolt Zulu, and so on. With a little imagination every ship, every official in the Navy, every official in the country for that matter, could have their very own radiotelephone call code.

We very seldom pronounced any of the words as listed. We simply spoke each word as one would in normal conversation although I remember practicing this list to the point I have been unable to pronounce victor correctly since.

Figure Spelling Table:

Code Word	Pronunciation
-----------	---------------

1	UNAONE	OO-NAH-WUN
2	BISSOTWO	BEES-SOH-TOO
3	TERRATHREE	TAY-RAH-TREE
4	KARTEFOUR	KAR-TAY-FOWER
5	PANTAFIVE	PAN-TAH-FIVE
6	SOXISIX	SOK-SEE-SIX
7	SETTESEVEN	SAY-TAY-SEVEN
8	OKTOEIGHT	OK-TOH-AIT
9	NOVENINE	NO-VAY-NINER
0	NADAZERO	NAH-DAH-ZAY-ROH
.	DECIMAL	DAY-SEE-MAL
+	FULL STOP	STOP

Note: Each syllable should be equally emphasized. The second component of each Code word is the Code word used in the Aeronautical Mobile Service.

If anyone started to pronounce the alphabet and figures from the above tables one would feel the brew the boys had going in the paint locker was more than ready for serving. The only thing we used was the figure nine. We simply called it NINER so we would not confuse the figure nine with the figure five.

Naturally all of the larger ships in this Navy fleet were to have not only a number of radio rooms, but ample equipment. The equipment in a Prestonian Class Frigate for radiotelegraph and radiotelephone communications was:

- All this equipment was Canadian Marconi Company
- One PV500 transmitter
- About four CM11 transmitters
- Several CSR5 receivers

There were a number of transmitters and receivers for use on the very high frequencies. I do not know if they were Canadian Marconi equipment. One can find an excellent description of this equipment on the web site of Jerry Proc VE3FAB.

HMCS ST STEPHEN was a naval weather ship as well as a department of transport weather ship. She will be described with the weather ships. She was not converted to Prestonian Class. She was converted to a D.O.T. weather ship.



HMCS OUTREMONT



John Leightizer

HMCS BUCKINGHAM “making her number” C G Z B

Radio Staff:

P1RM3	F. Micallef
P2RM2	C. Green
ABRM1	P. Rowan
ABRM1	I. Deslandes
OSRMS	Cyr
ABRS1	G. Ball
ABRS1	J. Hickey



Pat Sweeney. Dublin, Ireland

HMCS LAUZON entering Dublin, Ireland 1962 “making her number” C Y V H

Radio Staff:

PIRM3	D. Bruce
LSRM2	J. Bechard
ABRM1	J. Lloyd
ABRM1	G. Robelliard
ABRM1	P. Fretz
ABRM1	J. Leightizer
OSRMS	H. Gallant
LSRS2	E. Vhutch
LSRS2	D. Preston



John Leightizer

HMCS LAUZON



Canadian Armed Forces DNS-21981

HMCS SWANSEA



S. G. "Spud" Roscoe

Radio One HMCS SWANSEA 1960 – left to right: Don Ryan ABRM, Malcolm McPhail OSRM, Ron Bell ABSG (standing) and Dave Carlin OSSG

HMCS SWANSEA COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT – 1960

A listing from the ship's Christmas card of 1960.

A/CMD.O B.E. Moss

Signalman

P2SG3	D. Marsh
LSSG2	J. Bain
ABSG1	R. Laronde
ABSG1	M. MacPhail
OSSG1	R. Bell
OSSGS	D. Carlin
OSSGS	D. Kendall
OSSGS	C. Godfrey

Radioman

PIRM3	J. Rusnak
LSRM2	J. Lalumiere
ABRM1	C. LeBlanc
OSRMS	G. Thibault
OSRMS	R. Dunham
OSRMS	M. Travers

Radioman Special

LSRS2	A. Crabbe
ABRS1	S. Roscoe



S. G. "Spud" Roscoe

Spud Roscoe operating the DAU HF Direction Finder, copying traffic from the SP600 Receiver in Radio Four, and operating the SRE; HMCS SWANSEA 1960.

Many former naval personnel who also worked at the VCS station had sailed in the Prestonian Class Frigates. Bill Turner on the technical staff sailed in CAP DE LA MADELEINE; Dave MacKinnon in BEACON HILL; Norm Brooks in STE THERESE; John Leightizer in LANARK and BUCKINGHAM and I spent some time in OUTREMONT, BUCKINGHAM and SWANSEA. Bill, Dave, Norm and John were Radiomen. I was a Radioman Special rating and operated Radio Four. The Radioman Special branch did the radio direction finding work. My Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers were the ones who had taken the radio direction finding bearings of the U-boats during World War II. It was a most interesting job. I did not get the chance but many within this branch exchanged with members of the United States Navy. I worked with several American Chief and Petty Officers while I was stationed at HMCS COVERDALE, Moncton, New Brunswick. The equivalent rating in the United States Navy was their Communications Technician.

THE ICEBREAKERS, REPAIR SHIPS AND SUPPLY SHIPS

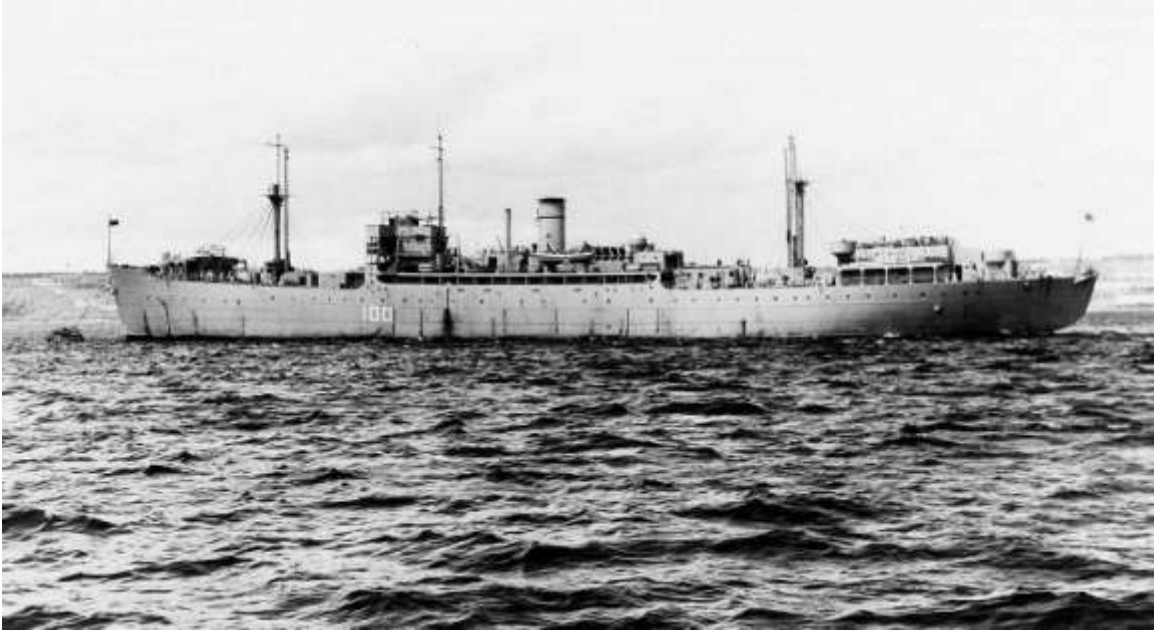
As near as I can tell there have been two icebreakers to serve in the Royal Canadian Navy only. The first was HMCS EARL GREY and she was built in 1909 to act as a ferry between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. She was taken over by the navy during World War I and was listed as an icebreaker and not a patrol vessel or any other type of vessel. She was sold to Russia early in the war in 1914 and a Canadian naval crew delivered her to Russia. Alf Lawton was her Warrant Officer Telegraphist.

HMCS LABRADOR was a Heavy Icebreaker constructed from the plans of the United States Coast Guard Wind Class Icebreakers, and was the second icebreaker to serve in the Canadian navy. HMCS LABRADOR was listed as an Arctic Patrol Vessel and not as an Icebreaker. I believe the U.S. Coast Guard had around six of these, but the type name comes from the four that were named WESTWIND, EASTWIND, NORTHWIND and SOUTHWIND. LABRADOR served a four-year hitch in the Navy from 1953 until 1957, and was then transferred to the Department of Transport fleet. When this change came about she naturally could not retain her naval call sign of CGVM. This had to be changed to CGGM from the D.O.T. block of call signs.

	VDI	HMCS EARL GREY
50	CGVM	HMCS LABRADOR

The two Repair Ships were the CAPE SCOTT and the CAPE BRETON, named for two capes, one on each coast of Canada. These ships came from a fleet of twenty-one maintenance and repair ships that had been constructed from merchant ship hulls for the Royal Navy during the final months of World War II. CAPE BRETON was launched on April 25th, 1945, and served the Royal Navy as FLAMBOROUGH HEAD until 1951 when she became HMCS CAPE BRETON. CAPE SCOTT was launched on March 20th, 1945. From 1947 until 1950 she was the RNN VULKAAN, a part of the Royal Netherlands Naval Fleet. She returned to the Royal Navy as BEACHY HEAD in 1950 and in 1952 became HMCS CAPE SCOTT.

100	CGXR	HMCS CAPE BRETON
101	CGTH	HMCS CAPE SCOTT



Canadian Armed Forces HS-53214

HMCS CAPE BRETON



A.W. "Bert" Hawling

This is the HARTLAND POINT a sister of HMCS CAPE BRETON and HMCS CAPE SCOTT in 1979. The HARTLAND POINT had call sign GKZG.



Canadian Armed Forces DNS-24901

HMCS CAPE SCOTT

Joe Morrow retired a Chief Radioman in the R.C.N. and served for a time on the VCS station staff. Joe was the Chief Radioman in CAPE SCOTT for several years. Their radio rooms were small and along the lines of a merchant ship for the period. When they first served in the R.C.N. they were fitted with a CM11 as their main transmitter. This proved rather useless in trying to maintain contact with Halifax Radio CFH from the West Indies, and the operators had to impose upon the good nature of American warships in their area to relay their messages to Halifax. Shortly after this performance a PV500 was installed, and after that while they were with the fleet they acted as a communications relay station. The operators had to commandeer a portion of the bridge when available because they had little room in the Radio Room. The PV500 meant they had communications but little room to operate.

The average speed of these two was seven knots, so whenever they were going to be needed they departed several weeks in advance of the fleet they were to service. They were floating workshops and were excellent ships to sail in. The crews were made up of the cream of the Navy's technical trades and the finest of a fine bunch with which to work. If there was something these guys could not supply or repair, they invariably could rig a "make do" until the ship returned to a major centre.

Many of the radio operators in these ships obtained their Amateur Radio Licence. A big help to all concerned. Not only did it give the crews some contact with mother and the kids back home, but many capers were performed by these stations. My reason for mentioning this is the fact that at one time CAPE SCOTT needed an odd part. One of the radio operators contacted an obliging Ham (Amateur Radio Operator) in the New York area and he obtained this part. On arrival in Bermuda the part was there, when the normal chain of command would have created considerable delay.

Both Repair Ships terminated their naval service years ago. HMCS CAPE BRETON terminated her service in 1994. On October 20th, 2001, she was sunk in a diving park off Nanaimo, British Columbia. My uncle, Harland Whitman had served as a civilian instructor in CAPE BRETON back in the 1950's when she acted as an engineering school while alongside at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Quite a few former naval ships have been sunk in diving parks. HMCS SASKATCHEWAN is sunk in the same park as CAPE BRETON.

There have been at least five Supply Ships to serve in the Royal Canadian Navy. The two supply ships, HMCS PROVIDER and HMCS PRESERVER that I have recorded with the Fairmiles acted as Mother Ships to these little ships. Their correct listing with the navy was as a Fairmile Base Supply Ship. Both terminated their Canadian naval careers at the end of World War II and became members of the Peruvian Navy.

The navy had another supply ship built in 1963 in Quebec that became another HMCS PROVIDER. This ship made it possible for the other naval ships to remain at sea for extended periods. PROVIDER could refuel and re-supply the other ships while steaming alongside, one on either side and from experience gained from this the navy had two more built in Saint John, New Brunswick. My "Uncle Bill", Chief Engineering Mechanic William A. Roscoe was stationed in Saint John with these two when built. These two were commissioned in 1969 and 1970, another PRESERVER and the other HMCS PROTECTEUR.

The five Supply Ships, their pendant number, call sign, radiotelephone call code and the type of vessel as listed in the naval list of ships:

F94	CGNR	HMCS PRESERVER		Fairmile Base Supply Ship
F100	CGLJ	HMCS PROVIDER		Fairmile Base Supply Ship
508	CZCF	HMCS PROVIDER	"Unequalled"	Fleet Replenishment Ship
509	CYTV	HMCS PROTECTEUR	"Jigger L"	Fleet Replenishment Ship
510	CGRG	HMCS PRESERVER	"Fireworks H"	Operation Support Ship

I do not know what made HMCS PRESERVER an Operation Support Ship and the other two a Fleet Replenishment Ship. This HMCS PRESERVER and HMCS PROTECTEUR were identical and they were different in appearance than the second HMCS PROVIDER. The second HMCS PROVIDER was decommissioned and laid up at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in July 1998. She was used to make a movie about a Russian submarine "The Widow Maker" in 2000 while laid up. A navy is the only outfit that could afford to operate her because of her high powered engines so the Canadian government is having a hard time trying to sell her.

Canada has recycled several four-letter call signs she has assigned over the years. I will never understand why, but CZCF was HMCS ONTARIO's call sign. Canada has been allotted many thousand four-character call signs over the years by the International Telecommunication Union. There has been no need to recycle any or split them up to identify the owner/operator of the ship they were assigned.

Canadians have fought with and for the United States in every war the United States has had, including their civil war of the 1860's. There were Canadians on both sides of their civil war. We never get any credit for participating in these wars, but will likely continue to participate with and for them in any future skirmish they have.

HMCS PROTECTEUR, HMCS ATHABASKAN and HMCS TERRA NOVA departed Halifax, Nova Scotia, on August 24th, 1990, for the Persian Gulf. Canada called this Operation Friction and the Americans called this Desert Storm. These three ships took 5 Sea King Helicopters with them and served with the American forces in this war. HMCS HURON was based on the West Coast and went across the Pacific Ocean and joined this fleet. After this war terminated HMCS HURON came home via the Atlantic and on to the West Coast via the Panama Canal, circumnavigating the world. A squadron of Canadian CF18 Fighter Aircraft participated in this war.

HMCS HURON has been decommissioned and in 2006 there is a plan to sink her as an artificial reef along with several other former Canadian naval ships.

HMCS PRESERVER, HMCS IROQUOIS and HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN departed Halifax, Nova Scotia, on October 17th, 2001, for the Arabian Sea. These three met up with HMCS HALIFAX already in

route to this war on terrorism. HMCS HALIFAX was on NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) exercises around Spain when the orders for these four were received. Canada calls this Operation Apollo. These four ships had six to eight Sea King Helicopters with them and served with the American forces in this war. A West Coast ship, HMCS VANCOUVER, left for this war via the Pacific Ocean on October 29th, 2001. VANCOUVER was in exercises off the California coast when ordered and joined an U.S. carrier group. The Canadian ships spend a lot of time in exercises with U.S. carrier groups so when needed they blend right in with the U.S. Navy. Three C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, two Aurora coastal patrol aircraft, and one Airbus (a combined passenger cargo aircraft) joined this armada. The Aurora is the Canadian version of the P3 Orion.

Both HMCS ST. JOHN'S and HMCS TORONTO worked towards a high state of readiness in case they were needed and HMCS TORONTO departed Halifax, Nova Scotia, on December 5th, 2001, to replace HMCS HALIFAX with NATO. Every crewmember in HMCS TORONTO was wearing a Toronto Maple Leafs Toque when they sailed out the harbour. These hats were donated by the city of Toronto. The Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team is one of the original six hockey teams to form the National Hockey League.

HMCS ST. JOHN'S departed Halifax, Nova Scotia, on May 1st, 2002, to join Operation Apollo as the ninth Canadian ship to serve in this war against terrorism according to the Halifax newspapers. HMCS HALIFAX, HMCS PRESERVER, HMCS IROQUOIS and HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN had all returned safely a few weeks before HMCS ST. JOHN'S departed. HMCS ST. JOHN'S joined HMCS OTTAWA, HMCS ALGONQUIN and HMCS TORONTO. The supply ship HMCS PROTECTEUR based on the West Coast joined Operation Apollo shortly after HMCS ST. JOHN'S.

THE ALGERINE CLASS MINESWEEPERS AFTER WORLD WAR II

The Navy retained nine of the twelve Algerine Class Minesweepers or Escort Vessels, whichever term you prefer. MIDDLESEX was lost shortly after the war when she ran aground on Shut In Island, just to the east of the approaches to Halifax on December 2nd, 1946. The Navy removed all they could and left the rest to the fate of the elements. My description of the post war RCMP FRENCH mentions this accident.

FORT FRANCES and NEW LISKEARD also served other government departments such as the Department of Transport and Department of the Environment. Naturally they had to have a different call sign while serving in that capacity. FORT FRANCES was CGCK and NEW LISKEARD was CGCF.

The nine Algerines retained were:

168	CZJR	NEW LISKEARD	"Extort E"
169	CYVX	PORTAGE	"Assort W"
170	CGKP	FORT FRANCES	"Equal N"
171	CYZV	KAPUSKASING	"Menu K"
172	CYVZ	WALLACEBURG	"Barmaid A"
173	CGJB	ROCKCLIFFE	"Cabot L"
174	CYZG	OSHAWA	"Barmaid X"
176	CYVS	SAULT STE MARIE	"Jigger P"
177	CYVT	WINNIPEG	"Inlet W"

HMCS FORT FRANCES retained her World War II CZJQ call sign for a short time after the war.

THE BANGOR CLASS MINESWEEPERS AFTER WORLD WAR II

Ten of the fifty-four Bangor Class Minesweepers had Diesel engines and the rest had Steam engines. The Navy kept three of the ten after it was realized the Mounted Police could not afford them. This is explained with my description of the RCMP fleet. They were:

178	CYQP	BROCKVILLE	“Barmaid Y”
179	CYQK	DIGBY	“Mariner I”
180	CYQX	GRANBY	“Fancy Ball Y”

The Navy used HMCS GRANBY as a Diving Tender based at Halifax, Nova Scotia. The other two were training vessels. When the Korean War broke out, the Navy decided to re-commission eighteen more Bangor’s. These all had steam engines and were as follow:

181	CGKS	DRUMMONDVILLE	
182	CGJT	KENTVILLE	“Native M”
183	CGRQ	PORT HOPE	
184	CZDN	GANANOQUE	
185	CGVB	SWIFT CURRENT	
186	CGYF	MALPEQUE	
187	CZCP	WESTMOUNT	
188	CGLW	NIPIGON	
189	CZDH	MINAS	
190	CGRH	SARNIA	
191	CGXE	KENORA	
192	CGQV	MAHONE	
193	CZFI	BLAIRMORE	
194	CZCR	MILLTOWN	
195	CGVS	FORT WILLIAM	
196	CGRC	RED DEER	
197	CZGF	MEDICINE HAT	
198	CZJD	GODERICH	

Only two, HMCS KENTVILLE and HMCS MINAS were re-commissioned for a short period each as training vessels. The four letter international call sign listed here is not their World War II call sign.



Public Archives Canada PA-114516

HMCS KENTVILLE in No. 2 Lock of the Lachine Canal, Quebec, May 24th, 1954

THE PRICE PAID IN MEN AND SHIPS DURING WORLD WAR II

The World War II Royal Canadian Navy cannot be mentioned without stating the actual price paid in men and ships during this war. This fleet either sank or assisted in sinking twenty-seven German U-boats and either captured or destroyed forty-two enemy surface ships. The price paid for this record was in the loss of six destroyers, one frigate, ten corvettes, five minesweepers, one patrol vessel, and one armed yacht. A total of twenty-four ships lost. The total cost in lives for all actions involving the Navy: 1,797 killed, 319 wounded, and 95 were taken prisoner of war.

The ships lost were:

Destroyers:

ATHABASKAN	April 29 th , 1944
FRASER	June 25 th , 1940
MARGAREE	October 23 rd , 1940
OTTAWA	September 13 th , 1942
SKEENA	October 25 th , 1944
ST. CROIX	September 20 th , 1943

Frigate:

VALLEYFIELD	May 7 th , 1944
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Corvettes:

ALBERNI	August 21 st , 1944
CHARLOTTETOWN	September 11 th , 1942
LEVIS	September 19 th , 1941
LOUISBURG	February 6 th , 1943
REGINA	August 8 th , 1944
SHAWINIGAN	November 24 th , 1944
SPIKENARD	February 10 th , 1942
TRENTONIAN	February 22 nd , 1945
WEYBURN	February 22 nd , 1943
WINDFLOWER	December 7 th , 1941

Minesweepers:

BRAS D'OR	October 19 th , 1940
CHEDABUCTO	November 10 th , 1943
CLAYOQUOT	December 23 rd , 1944
ESQUIMALT	April 16 th , 1945
GUYSBOROUGH	April 10 th , 1945

Patrol Vessels:

OTTER	March 26 th , 1941
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Armed Yacht:

RACCOON	September 7 th , 1942
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Several small ships taken over by the Navy at the outbreak of the war were classified minesweepers, and I mentioned this elsewhere. HMCS BRAS D'OR was one of these and she had actually been built as a lightship. You will also see from these lists that when certain new ships joined this fleet, they were named for one of these that had been lost from enemy action. The international call sign of one lost was reassigned as soon as possible to a new ship. For example CHARLOTTETOWN was assigned CYRF and this call sign was reassigned to SWANSEA when she was commissioned. Some of these World War II call signs

remained with the vessel after the war and SWANSEA held the CYRF call sign until she was broken up in 1967.

Honour Role—Ships lost in the Battle of the Atlantic

HMCS FRASER, Destroyer, lost 25 June 1940, Bay of Biscay, collision HMS *Calcutta*, 46 RCN—13 RN died
 HMCS BRAS D'OR, Minesweeper, lost 19 October 1940, Gulf of St. Lawrence, foundered, 30 died
 HMCS MARGAREE, Destroyer, lost 22 October 1940, N. Atlantic, collision MV *Port Ferry*, 142 died
 HMCS OTTER, Armed Yacht, lost 26 March 1941, off Halifax, fire, 19 died
 HMCS LEVIS, Corvette, lost 19 September 1941, off Greenland, torpedoed by U-Boat, 18 died
 HMCS WINDFLOWER, Corvette, lost 7 December 1941, off St. John's NF collision SS *Zypenberg*, 23 died
 HMCS SPIKENARD, Corvette, lost 10 February 1942, mid-Atlantic, torpedoed by U-Boat, 57 died
 HMCS RACoon, Armed Yacht, lost 7 September 1942, Gulf of St. Lawrence, torpedoed by U-Boat, 37 died
 HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN, Corvette, 11 September 1942, St. Lawrence River, torpedoed-U-Boat, 10 died
 HMCS OTTAWA, Destroyer, 13 September 1942, mid-Atlantic, torpedoed by U-Boat, 113 RCN, 6 RN died
 HMCS WEYBURN, Corvette, 22 February 1943, Strait of Gibraltar, submarine laid mine, 8 RCN, 1RN died
 HMCS LOUISBURG, Corvette, lost 2 October 1942, Mediterranean, air attack, 37 RCN, 5 RN died
 HMCS ST CROIX, Destroyer, 29 September 1943, mid-Atlantic, torpedoed by U-Boat, 147 RCN, 1RN died
 HMCS ATHABASKAN, Destroyer, 29 April 1944, English Channel, torpedoed by Ger. Destroyer, 128 died
 HMCS CHEDABUCTO, Minesweeper, lost 21 October 1943, St. Lawrence River, collision with Cable Ship *Lord Kelvin*, 1 died
 HMCS VALLEYFIELD, Frigate, lost 6 May 1944, off Cape Race NF, torpedoed by U-Boat, 125 died
 HMCS ALBERNI, Corvette, lost 21 August 1944, English Channel, torpedoed by U-Boat, 59 died
 HMCS REGINA, Corvette, lost 8 August 1944, off Cornwall, England, torpedoed by U-Boat, 30 died
 HMCS SKEENA, Destroyer, lost 25 October 1944, Reykjavik, Iceland, stranded, 15 died
 HMCS CLAYOQUOT, Minesweeper, lost 24 December 1944, off Halifax, NS, torpedoed by U-Boat, 8 died
 HMCS SHAWINIGAN, Corvette, lost 24 November 1944, off Cape Breton, NS, torpedoed by U-Boat, 91 died
 HMCS TRENTONIAN, Corvette, lost 22 February, 1945, off Falmouth, England, torpedoed by U-Boat, 6 died
 HMCS ESQUIMALT, Minesweeper, lost 19 April 1945, Halifax Approaches, torpedoed by U-Boat, 44 died
 HMCS GUYSBOROUGH, Minesweeper, 17 March 1945, off Ushant, France, torpedoed by U-Boat, 51 died

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THE ANIMAL AND BIRD CLASS PATROL VESSELS

The Fairmiles as can be seen from the above list and mentioned previously, came through the war unscathed or reasonably so. After the war the Navy retained seven of these little ships and finally got around to giving them a proper name in 1954. These seven became known as Animal Class Patrol Vessels and they were:

Name	Became	Call Sign	Pendant	Radiotelephone
HMC ML062	HMCS WOLF	CGWR	762	"Incident I"
HMC ML079	HMCS RACCOON	CYQT	779	"Incident M"
HMC ML104	HMCS COUGAR	CYXC	704	"Disband Z"
HMC ML106	HMCS BEAVER	CZGS	706	"Irium E"
HMC ML111	HMCS MOOSE	CYQF	711	"Incident Q"
HMC ML116	HMCS REINDEER	CYQY	716	"Flashlight D"
HMC ML124	HMCS ELK	CZDL	724	"Catapult A"

These seven Animal Class Patrol Vessels were replaced with a Seaward Defense Patrol Vessel better known as a Bird Class Patrol Vessel. They were as follows:

Pendant	Call Sign	Name	Radiotelephone
780	CGLO	HMCS LOON	"Bellamy Q"

781	CGTN	HMCS CORMORANT	"Calamity Q"
782	CGZH	HMCS BLUE HERON	"Debutante E"
783	CZCU	HMCS MALLARD	"Ellsworth Q"
784	CZFP	HMCS ARCTIC TERN	"Oberlin P"
785	CZGV	HMCS SANDPIPER	"Retention P"
786	CGYH	HMCS HERRING GULL	"Suspender Z"
787	CGKK	HMCS KINGFISHER	"Terminology B"



Canadian Armed Forces DNS 28550

HMCS LOON

The first of these, HMCS LOON was commissioned in 1955 and the other three joined the fleet the next year, 1956. Yes, the other three. The Navy went to all this trouble and then the government did not build the last four. Not only that but they created badges for all eight.



The badges are from the Quebec Naval Museum Collection.

These four little ships, 780 to 783 inclusive not only carried one radiotelegraph operator (radioman), but their commanding officers held the rank of First Class Chief Petty Officer. The four vessels were built in Ontario and were commissioned with junior officers in command and then were turned over to the Chief's. BLUE HERON had a short naval career of six months and was transferred to the Marine Division of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. She was the only naval vessel to serve in the RCMP and keep her naval name and call sign. The chief petty officers were given a special course in order to qualify for this command position. The three navy commanding officers in 1962 were:

C1BN Henderson	HMCS CORMORANT
C1BN Amirault	HMCS MALLARD
C1BN Trevor Lovekin	HMCS LOON

C1BN Ted Rigby was Commanding Officer of HMCS CORMORANT in 1960. BN was the two letter identification of the Bosun trade. This trade was created from the many changes in the navy around 1960. This trade was assigned the old QM or Quartermaster trade badge. Those who held the QM rate were now BNs and I believe some of the other seaman trades were shuffled around at this time, and some of those involved wound up in this new BN trade. The BN trade became the pure seamanship trade in the navy. The other trades were within their own little group and the only seamanship they used was the little that affected their area of work or expertise.

The job of radio operator was a "Jammy Touch" in naval jargon, meaning it was a very easy and enjoyable job and anyone who had the pleasure of serving as one thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The communication trades were affected by this change in the navy mentioned above. In 1955 the three communication trades were Communicator Visual, Communicator Radio and Communicator Supplementary. All three trades received new trade or branch badges in 1955 and all three were renamed in 1960. Communicator Visual became Signaller, Communicator Radio became Radioman and Communicator Supplementary became Radioman Special.

The Seaward Defense or Bird Class vessels carried one Radioman and one Signaller. These vessels carried a Canadian Marconi Company CM11 radio station, which meant they could communicate much farther than they would ever travel. They were found patrolling around the inshore waters of the East Coast. Another favourite task was to go up on the Great Lakes and give the Reserve Navy training and experience in an actual boat rather than by means of a classroom blackboard.

HMCS LOON is interesting and one item of note is that her call sign CGLO is the only naval call sign I have found that came close to resembling the name of the ship, LOon. During the time I served in the Navy

(1956-1961) the Navy had a very high frequency radiotelephone intercom circuit in service for Halifax Harbour, with the message centre located in the Dockyard. The call signs used by the ships were their two-letter suffix spoken via the phonetic alphabet. For example, HMCS LOON would have been 'Lima Oscar' (call sign CGLO) on this circuit.

The Navy turned LOON, MALLARD, and CORMORANT over to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation in the 1960's. The late Winston Lyons lived in LOON with his family alongside the Sambro Government Wharf for a few years. He was a seaman in the Coast Guard Lifeboat 117 at the time. He sold LOON and she went down on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia someplace. Some priests of some description bought CORMORANT and outfitted her as a floating mission boat for Central America complete with a dental chair. They did not appear to have much knowledge of the sea or seamanship but managed to get CORMORANT out Halifax Harbour and down as far as the Eastern United States. The United States Coast Guard terminated their voyage there before they killed themselves, and CORMORANT has not been heard from since. The last we heard of MALLARD she was lying alongside a dock in St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia. BLUE HERON served in the RCMP from 1956 until 1968 and I found no record as to what became of her.

The New Zealand Navy had four little ships similar to these built at Brooke Marine, Lowestoft, England, in 1974-1975. All four were capable of over 20 knots with twin 1500-bhp at 1500-rpm diesel engines. Each carried a crew of twenty-one: three officers, four senior ratings and fourteen junior ratings. These four little ships were to be used for fisheries protection and resource duties around the New Zealand coast. The reason I mention them is because they looked so much like these Canadian vessels. The four with pendant number, call sign and name were:

P3568	ZMZL	HMNZS PUKAKI
P3569	ZMZM	HMNZS ROTOITI
P3570	ZMZN	HMNZS TAUPO
P3571	ZMZO	HMNZS HAWEA

These four were called Lake Class Patrol Boats after New Zealand lakes. There is a Lake Hawea, a Lake Taupo, a Lake Pukaki, but I have not found a Lake Rotoiti. New Zealand has quite a few lakes but this one must be so small it does not appear on any of my maps.

These four little ships were delivered to New Zealand via the heavy lift ship STARMAN with call sign H3WI. The four were delivered in two shipments. The crews in these four must have accumulated some rather interesting memories while serving in these four.

All of these little ships I have tried to describe are much the same size. The Fairmile was 112 feet, the Submarine Chaser was 110 feet, the Bird Class Patrol Vessel or Seaward Defense Vessel was 92 feet and the New Zealand Lake Class was 107 feet long.

The pendant numbers of the Lake Class remind me of a friend in Louisiana. He was a member of the volunteer fire department when they acquired their second fire truck. The chief stated they should number the trucks to keep the paper work organized. This friend wanted them numbered something like 1452 and 1531 rather than simply 1 and 2.

New Zealand seems to have remained closer to the United Kingdom than the other Commonwealth Countries, and most from New Zealand still refer to the United Kingdom as home. The New Zealand Navy still uses British pendant numbers. Canada terminated this practice in 1949. This is the reason for these high pendant numbers on the New Zealand vessels.

THE HYDROFOIL

In 1963 the Defense Department gave DeHavilland Canada a contract to build a suitable hydrofoil vessel capable of sailing in the open ocean. DeHavilland Canada was building some of the world's finest aircraft

at the time. There had been various tests made over the years to indicate that a high-speed hydrofoil vessel was capable of operating in the open ocean and would be a suitable vessel for anti-submarine warfare. This vessel was designated a Fast Hydrofoil Escort and given pendant number 400, and was known as FHE400. This vessel was named BRAS D'OR in recognition of the work Alexander Graham Bell had done on similar vessels on this lake, and it was assigned HMCS QUEBEC's old call sign CZCK. A 2000-bhp engine powered the vessel in the hull borne mode and a 22,000-shp Pratt and Whitney gas turbine powered the vessel in the foil-borne mode. HMCS BRAS D'OR managed a speed of 63 knots in the open ocean, exceeding her designed speed of 60 knots. Bras D'Or is French for Golden Arm. Labrador means much the same, as in La Bras d'Or, The Golden Arm. HMCS BRAS D'OR's only voyage was from Halifax to Bermuda and on to Norfolk, Virginia, and back to Halifax in 1969. The project terminated in the 1970's and the vessel was placed in a museum in Quebec. I do not know if this vessel carried a radio operator – radioman on this voyage.

400 CZCK HMCS BRAS D'OR

The reason I want to record this vessel is one of personal experience. When it was under construction there were statements made that Canada would test and create the hydrofoil, the United Kingdom would specialize in hovercraft, and the United States was going to specialize in catamarans or something else. When the St. Laurent destroyers, which the rest of the world called frigates, were under construction, there were statements made that Canada was going to sell many copies of these vessels to foreign navies. Canada did not sell a copy and not even an old used copy to a third world navy. The same statement was made when the City Class Patrol Frigates were under construction. Canada has not sold a copy and not likely will.

This statement that Canada was going to create the hydrofoil alone and the rest were not going to have anything to do with one, sounded rather foolish to me. In 1962, a year before Canada gave the contract for this vessel I was alongside Seattle, Washington, in the square rigged sailing vessel BOUNTY. One evening one of the seamen brought two gentlemen down to the radio room and said that I was the only officer on board. These two men were dressed in suits and were engineers and were wondering if they could look BOUNTY over. I escorted them around and showed them everything including the bilge. On completion of this tour they asked me if I could leave the ship and said they wanted to show me something for showing them around. They pinned a badge on the front of my shirt, that was a visitor's pass, and they took me to a dock that was probably a part of the Boeing Aircraft complex. There they showed me two hydrofoils identical to what became HMCS BRAS D'OR. They took me on board the one next to the jetty and the other was alongside this one. We went through it like I had shown them BOUNTY. The wheelhouse was like an aircraft cockpit and the wheels looked identical to those found in an aircraft. The interior was not finished, but they showed me where the galley, radio room, and so on would be on completion. Since then both the United States Navy and the Royal Navy have operated hydrofoil vessels and not one was a sister of BRAS D'OR.

I believe one of the two I was shown in Seattle became USS HIGH POINT with pendant number 1 and listed as PCH1. I have no idea what became of the other.

The Royal Navy had some experience with a hydrofoil in 1939 and one other since then. This one lasted less than two years and was terminated. She was built by Boeing in Seattle, Washington, and was taken over to the United Kingdom as deck cargo on the CORDILLERA EXPRESS with call sign DNCE. She arrived at Southampton on November 22nd, 1979. She was different than the American vessels. At least she did not look like the American hydrofoils I had seen, so the superstructure at least was different. This Royal Navy hydrofoil with pendant number, call sign and name was:

P296 GYHH HMS SPEEDY

Some of the American Hydrofoils were known as a PHM, a Pegasus Class Fast Attack Hydrofoil (Missile) and six with their pendant number, call sign and name were:

1 NWGT USS PEGASUS

2	NJQJ	USS HERCULES
3	NHCN	USS TAURUS
4	NVMZ	USS AQUILA
5	NQAS	USS ARIES
6	NPGU	USS GEMINI

The United States Navy used this fleet mainly for drug interdiction in the Caribbean Sea and terminated this fleet in 1993. They found that this fleet was not practical. Over the years the United States Navy has had other hydrofoils, but mainly used for experimental purposes with a few in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Two of these were USS FLAGSTAFF PGH1, pendant number 1 and USS TUCUMCARI PGH2 and pendant number 2. There are several civilian hydrofoil ferries in use around the world and most of them are built and sold in Russia. A few of these are registered in Canada and in use on the Great Lakes.

THE HOVERCRAFT

The Hovercraft is the vehicle that replaced or terminated any serious construction or interest in the Hydrofoil. The Hovercraft is the boat the crew flies as they describe it. According to a television program I watched in April 2002, the United States Navy has 91 copies that they designed and built from the British models, and from the British experience with these boats. The British brought one over and experimented with it on the Mackenzie River during the winter of 1966-67 while I was a radio operator at Inuvik Marine and Aeradio, Inuvik, North West Territories. This one operated on the ice of the Mackenzie River mainly around the village of Norman Wells. This one used the aircraft frequency of 5680 kilohertz for communication with the Department of Transport Aeradio stations on the Mackenzie River. This frequency was audio modulation (AM) only at that time. We used to listen to it at Inuvik but I do not believe anyone at Inuvik worked it. It used the name Hovercraft followed by three or four digits as a call sign.

The Canadian Coast Guard has used hovercraft over the years, and has actually used them as icebreakers. Their main base for these vehicles was on the West Coast. They have used them as icebreakers on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. They were equipped with a lot of electronics but their main means of communication was via the very high radio frequencies on both the marine FM and air AM frequencies. The Canadian Hovercraft has a registration like the Canadian Aircraft. The Canadian Hovercraft has the prefix C-H followed by three additional letters. This five-letter individual registration is painted on each individual boat that flies. Canadian Coast Guard Aircraft and Hovercraft are registered as civil and not military vehicles, but they use a radio call sign similar to a military vehicle such as Coast Guard 75.

THE SAILING VESSELS OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

The Royal Canadian Navy has had at least five sailing vessels that have been used for training in sail. Two of them were named HMCS VENTURE. I have not found any information on the first HMCS VENTURE other than she served the Navy from 1911 until 1918. The second HMCS VENTURE was rather interesting and was designed by W. J. Roue at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Mr. Roue was the one who designed the famous fishing vessel BLUENOSE. If one can picture the BLUENOSE, the vessel on the back of the Canadian ten-cent piece, another twenty feet longer, with three masts instead of two, it will give one a good idea of what she looked like. This HMCS VENTURE was 143 feet overall in length and was built at Meteghan River, Nova Scotia. She was rigged as a tern schooner with three masts on a hull similar to BLUENOSE. She was painted similar to BLUENOSE with a royal blue hull, gold stripe, varnished spars and a white boot topping. She served in the Navy from 1937 until 1945 and was renamed HC-190 at the end of her commission. In 1946 this vessel was renamed ALFRED AND EMILY, was registered at Barbados and traded in the West Indies. It is a shame this vessel did not remain a Canadian naval vessel. The "political bozo" that approved the sale of this vessel for scrap should have had a medal of the highest order. She would have been a welcome asset to the present tall ship program.

The second sailing vessel to serve was HMCS NADEN. She served from 1920 until 1922. When she was sold she was used as a rumrunner on the West Coast.

The fourth sailing vessel was HMCS PICKLE, a yawl that served from 1953 until 1979. This vessel was built as the German yacht HELGOLAND in 1936 and was turned over to Canada in 1953. From 1979 until 1984 HMCS PICKLE was left abandoned at Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1984 this vessel was renamed HELGOLAND and an attempt was made to salvage her.

The fifth sailing vessel is still in commission as of this writing, 2002. This one is a 77-foot Bermuda rigged ketch, HMCS ORIOLE. This vessel was built in 1929 but is in very good condition and a pretty sight under full sail. She has a white hull and when all sails are set she has a red, white and blue mizzen staysail. She has a matching, red white and blue spinnaker. On the white bar of the spinnaker is an Oriole bird in full plumage identical to the one on her ship's badge.

HMCS VENTURE (1)	1911-1918		No radio information
HMCS NADEN	1920-1922		No radio information
HMCS VENTURE (2)	1937-1945	CGBP	Fitted with a Marconi FR-12
HMCS PICKLE	1953-1979	CGTE	Pendant QW7
HMCS ORIOLE	1954	CYWP	Pendants QW3 and KC480

The only radio information I found on these interesting vessels was that of HMCS VENTURE (2). HMCS PICKLE and HMCS ORIOLE may have been equipped with radiotelegraph at one time. We towed HMCS PICKLE a short distance in the Gulf of St. Lawrence while I was Radio Officer in CCGS TUPPER. This was in the early 1970's and was during the night so I did not see her. She was using a VHF radiotelephone of some description for communications, and I believe she had no other means of radio communication at that time.

HMCS ORIOLE was the last naval command of Ellsworth T. Coggins from Weymouth North, Nova Scotia. The Junior Officer Training Establishment, Esquimalt, British Columbia, was commissioned as HMCS VENTURE in 1954 and lasted until the armed forces were combined into the one organization, the Canadian Armed Forces in 1968. HMCS ORIOLE was part of the sailing school of this organization and Ellsworth was in charge of the sailing school. Ellsworth spoke of the many times he had sailed around the Strait of Juan de Fuca in HMCS ORIOLE when we were in that area in BOUNTY. Ellsworth came out of the navy with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He spent a short time in the naval auxiliary vessels before taking command of the full rigged ship BOUNTY and the schooner BLUENOSE II. He had served as commanding officer of HMCS LOOS, HMCS DIGBY and HMCS SAULT STE MARIE prior to the sailing school. He was a great captain. I enjoyed sailing with him very much. I feel confident that if one could not learn to sail a vessel from his instruction, there was no hope of learning from anyone else. Ellsworth was the only sailing master in this area for some time. Just before he died the Coast Guard hired him to examine candidates for sail endorsements to their certificates. He was the only one qualified for the job.

THE NAVAL RADIOTELEGRAPH OPERATORS

There have been various groups of radiotelegraph operators who were just as efficient as the Royal Canadian Navy radiotelegraph operators, but one thing for certain there has been no group any better. These operators were the elite of the World's Telegraph Operators and were a pleasure to hear over the air or to watch operate from one of their shipboard stations. They had a pride in their art that was probably the most difficult thing the Navy had to overcome when they decided to terminate radiotelegraph and switch all their communications to radioteletype. Teletype is not only faster but with the last equipment in use was much more reliable. With the last radio equipment in use radioteletype could work through static and the normal conditions associated with radio on signals that an operator could not hear.

These Naval Telegraphers were permitted to use semi-automatic transmitting keys, but in order to use them they had to prove they were capable of transmitting code as well on them as they could on an ordinary hand key. Therefore, very few bothered to use anything but the hand key. I knew only one of these operators who used a semi-automatic key while I was in the Navy. The most common key in use by the Navy during this period was one manufactured by the E. F. Johnson Company in Waseca, Minnesota, U.S.A. This key

had this Company's Catalogue Number 114-320. The Wm. M. Nye Company Inc., Bellevue, Washington, U.S.A., bought the Johnson Company and advertised these same keys with the same catalogue number. These Naval operators did not secure these keys to the operating desks, but had one of their engineer friends make a steel base for them. This base was often coated with a sheet of thin rubber on the bottom to help hold the key in place on the operating desk.



John Rae VE1AGN

E. F. Johnson Company 114-320 Transmitting Key

These Naval operators transmitted continuously at twenty-five words per minute on these hand keys and the code was as near perfection as is humanly possible. No one knows the exact formula for making a good telegraph operator, but the major parts definitely involve rhythm, patience, a certain amount of natural talent, all saturated in practice. For many years the Royal Canadian Navy was one of the navies within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that participated in an annual communications exercise. Awards were given to the top operators in the various categories and John Leightizer and Norm Brooks were two of these operators who came away from this exercise as top telegraph operators. Quite a feat when you realize this exercise involved the United States Navy, the Royal Navy, and the navies of more than a half dozen other countries. Both John and Norm were on the VCS station staff for around twenty years or more.



John Leightizer

John Leightizer on duty in Radio One HMCS BUCKINGHAM

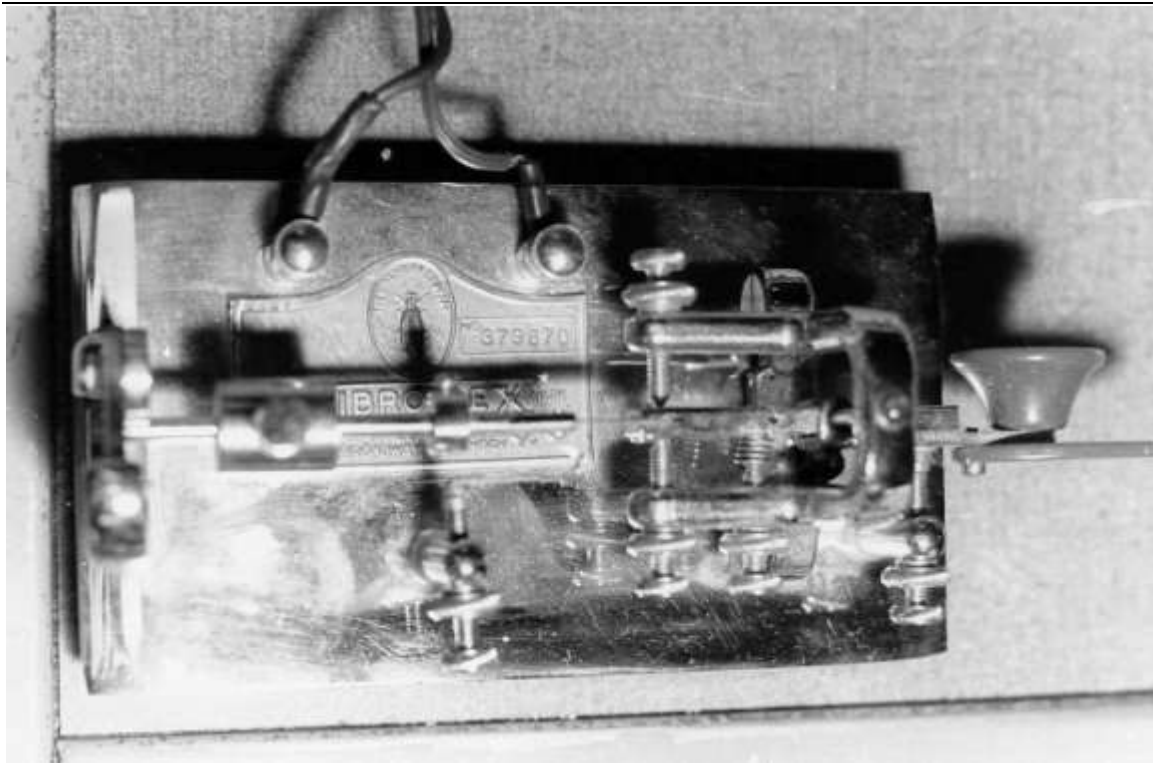


The Trident newspaper February 27th, 1969

The Captain of the Norwegian Naval Base, Bergen Norway presents the communications quiz trophy to LS Davidson, the senior member of the winning Canadian team. Other team members shown to Davidson's left are; LS McFarlane, LS Kerr and AB Norman Brooks. This was the 1968 team at Bergen, Norway.

The semi-automatic key first appeared in 1894 and was constructed by anyone and everyone, and was very popular especially when the major communication around the world was conducted by the landline telegraph. There were many companies formed which manufactured these keys, and as many operators who constructed their own. A hack saw blade became a favourite item to use as the lever or reed in these keys. The basic principal of the key was to operate from a sidewise motion rather than the normal up and down motion of the regular hand key. The term semi-automatic comes from the feature of holding this key's lever to one side so that it will cause it to send the dots in the code automatically via a spring reaction from the lever or reed. Pushing the lever in the opposite direction from the dots will send a steady dash. Therefore, with practice, these keys will transmit good code from the dots being made automatically and the dashes formed manually.

These semi-automatic keys were the most popular by all Canadian civilian operators. The most popular makes were the ones manufactured by the Vibroplex Company. They were the most popular because they had a simple and smooth action. When this company was formed they chose the Lightning Bug as their Company Crest and this bug was pictured on all their keys. From this crest all these keys, regardless of make or model were known as a Bug.



Paul Britton and John Rae VE1AGN

The late Mike Warden's Vibroplex Semi-automatic Key "Bug" May 19th, 1980



The Vibroplex Company Inc. Trade Mark that made these semi-automatic keys better known by the simple term "Bug".



The Vibroplex Company Inc

This is a smaller but better photograph of two Vibroplex semi-automatic telegraph keys known as a “Bug”. The one on the left is known as the Original Deluxe and the one on the right the Original Standard.



The Vibroplex Company Inc

There were several variations to these keys and the one above is known as the Blue Racer.

The Vibroplex Company started and remained in New York City for years. They had some competition from several companies who manufactured these keys, but they seemed to be the more popular. They are the last company to manufacture the semi-automatic key that I know of. The company moved from New York City to Portland, Maine, and then to Mississippi and is still in business in 2006.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE MARINE DIVISION

On termination of World War II the Marine Section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was reorganized. Ed Hartling had his naval career terminated several months before the war ended in order to go back with the R.C.M.P. and prepare for the return of their fleet. Instead of the prewar naval style uniforms and ranks, the members of this reformed section were to wear the identical uniform of the Land Force, with the addition of a Marine Crest above the left breast pocket. All members were to hold land force rank and the radio operators were Constable, Corporal, Sergeant, or the highest rank they could hold, Staff Sergeant. This Marine Section became the Marine Division officially in 1947.

Their prewar fleet saw considerable hard use during the war and none of those ships was returned on termination. The Navy turned over a number of Minesweepers and Fairmiles to the R.C.M.P. to become that portion of this new fleet that carried radio operators.

Naval Name

Became

Call Sign

Pendant

HMCS ML112	RCMP FORT WALSH	CGMR	MP33
HMCS ML119	RCMP FORT PITT	CGMM	----
HMCS TRANSCONA	RCMP FRENCH	CGMB	MP11
HMCS NORANDA	RCMP IRVINE	CGMF	MP13
HMCS TROIS RIVIERES	RCMP MACBRIEN	CGMG	MP14
HMCS BROCKVILLE	RCMP MACLEOD	CGMJ	----

RCMP FORT PITT and RCMP MACLEOD were not assigned pendant numbers.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP FORT WALSH the former naval Fairmile HMC ML112

Our government had grand plans and soon realized they could not afford a large fleet and had to downsize immediately. The following are ships they planned and had to return to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation shortly after they took delivery.

Naval Name	Was to be
HMC ML114	RCMP FORT SELKIRK
HMC ML117	RCMP FORT STEELE
HMCS TRURO	RCMP HERCHER
HMCS LACHINE	RCMP STARNES
HMCS GRANBY	RCMP COLONEL WHITE
HMCS DIGBY	RCMP PERRY

The Bangor Class minesweepers turned over to the R.C.M.P. were the ones with diesel engines. The two Forts or Fairmiles were equipped with the Marconi CM11 station as the main radio station that had been fitted by the Navy when they were constructed. The former Minesweepers also retained their naval Marconi stations containing the PV500 transmitter and the SMR3 receiver as the main equipment. Naturally our government had to issue distinctive call signs to this fleet so any who heard them would know exactly who and what they were. The CGM prefix went to those ships fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio operator when this fleet was first reformed after the war. Later these call signs were issued to all the ships in their fleet. When this fleet was first reformed after the war, the old CGP prefix was assigned to those ships in their fleet that were fitted with radiotelephone only, and the following is the 1950 listing for the radio telephone portion of the fleet:

Naval Name	Became	Call Sign
HMC HDPC27	RCMP BIG BEND	CGPS
HMC HDPC20	RCMP BRULE	CGPC
HMC HDPC25	RCMP CARNDUFF	CGPD
HMC HDPC29	RCMP CHILCOOT	CGPF
HMC HDPC19	RCMP CUTKNIFE	CGPG
HMC HDPC33	RCMP GRENFALL	CGPK
HMC HDPC40	RCMP LITTLE BOW	CGPL
HMC HDPC32	RCMP MOOSOMIN	CGPM
HMC HDPC26	RCMP SHAUNAVON	CGPN
HMC HDPC30	RCMP SLIDEOUT	CGPP
HMC HDPC39	RCMP STANDOFF	CGPT
HMC HDPC24	RCMP TAGISH	CGPQ
HMC HDPC6	RCMP WILLOW BUNCH	CGPW

They were former naval Harbour Defense Patrol Craft. Generally these vessels were 48 feet in length. Some were under 40 feet and some over 50 feet. The Royal Canadian Navy built 30 during World War II. They were named HPC1, HPC2, HPC3, and so on. I have no idea how high these numbers went. On the termination of World War II thirteen of these vessels were transferred to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and as you can see all thirteen became Detachment Class Patrol Boats. They were named after various R.C.M. Police Detachments around the country.

The loss of HMCS MIDDLESEX is not only most interesting, but will show the close relationship between the different branches of the various Canadian fleets. Just six months before MIDDLESEX was lost on December 2nd, 1946, she performed a very heroic deed in rescuing the crew from the Greek vessel ALFIOS that became stranded in the shifting sand of Sable Island. At the time MIDDLESEX was lost she was on her way out of Halifax at full speed to try and rescue the American fishing vessel OHIO out of Boston. OHIO had broken down in the area of Sable Island also, during a winter storm. When the fate of MIDDLESEX was made known another vessel had to be found to take over her duties immediately. This job was then assigned to RCMP FRENCH.



H. H. Brennan
S.S. ALFIOS ashore April 24th, 1946, Sable Island, Nova Scotia



H. H. Brennan

The American Fishing Trawler GALE, a sister of OHIO, trapped forever in the shifting sand of Sable Island, Nova Scotia, December 1945



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP FRENCH

As you can see from the above lists FRENCH was the former Minesweeper HMCS TRANSCONA. She displaced 590 tons, was 162 feet in length overall, had a beam of 28 feet and a draft of nine feet aft. She was capable of a top speed of 16 knots from two one thousand horsepower Sultzer diesels. HMCS ESQUIMALT was one of the ten Diesel Bangors and was lost on April 16th, 1945. Another, HMCS MELVILLE became the Fisheries Patrol Vessel CYGNUS with call sign CGFR, and the eight remaining were the ones transferred to the RCMP.



Pat Falvey

The Fisheries Patrol Vessel CYGNUS with call sign CGFR a former diesel Bangor Class Minesweeper the HMCS MELVILLE.

RCMP FRENCH was well known and had a most interesting career around Nova Scotia while the Mounted Police operated her from September 1945 until she was sold in February 1961. Probably the most hazardous rescue of the many she performed during this time was in rescuing OHIO from Sable Island. This December storm tended to worsen as FRENCH proceeded towards OHIO, and when OHIO was located it was well after dark. No attempt was to be made in passing a towline to OHIO until daylight, but OHIO's anchor was not holding in the sandy bottom and she was being driven towards the northwest bar of Sable Island. On realizing this FRENCH moved in and managed to pass a towline to OHIO on the first attempt. Credit has to be given to the Captain of FRENCH, Inspector A. R. Ascah, and his crew for this fine piece of seamanship, but the trip back to Halifax was definitely no pleasure cruise. Once the tow began the weather was a westerly gale directly in their path. They altered course towards Canso, keeping the gale on their port quarter, with the hope of acquiring a lee from the mainland of Nova Scotia from Canso on to Halifax. On reaching the Canso area the wind shifted to southwesterly and placed it directly in their path. The seas were so high that at times speed had to be reduced to less than one knot and at times OHIO, masts and all was lost from view. This storm persisted for one whole day and night then suddenly died. The huge seas abated and FRENCH was able to increase speed and soon reached Halifax. Fortunately the towline held through this storm and another rescue was successfully completed.

The Bird Class Patrol Vessel HMCS BLUE HERON was to have a very short naval career. BLUE HERON spent six months only in the Navy and was turned over to the Mounted Police in 1956. By some strange freak of fate BLUE HERON retained her naval call sign and name throughout her RCMP career. The Mounted Police must have been well satisfied with BLUE HERON because they built another for their fleet. The four Navy Bird Class Patrol Vessels were constructed from wood, but the fifth, RCMP VICTORIA, was constructed in steel and assigned to patrol the West Coast of Canada. The Mounted Police constructed two more ships that carried radio operators shortly after VICTORIA. These two were of their own design. The WOOD was larger than the other, FORT STEELE.

MP32	CGZH	RCMP BLUE HERON
MP31	CGMS	RCMP VICTORIA
MP17	CGMW	RCMP WOOD
MP34	CGMQ	RCMP FORT STEELE



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP BLUE HERON

I was unable to learn the equipment in the radio room of VICTORIA. She escorted us into a West Coast port one time, but I did not get a chance to visit her or locate any of her former operators. The other Bird Class vessels carried a Marconi CM11 station so she most likely had the same installation. The WOOD was the best equipped of this fleet, having a Radio Corporation of America 5U Console with a more modern or efficient RCA receiver than the standard receiver that came with this unit. From talking to John Stevens, radio operator in WOOD, I believe this receiver was an RCA CRM-R6A receiver. I have not seen one but from what I have read about this receiver it would appear to have been a good one. The WOOD was also fitted with a CM11 and a Marconi Seaway CN86 radiotelephone. The FORT STEELE was fitted with a CM11 that was removed from one of the Navy Fairmiles given them by the Navy. She also had a Marconi Seaway CN86 radiotelephone.

This fleet contained many smaller vessels in addition to the 1950 fleet listed and many were nearly one hundred feet in length, but none carried radio operators. All of this fleet naturally carried regular Mounted Police radiotelephone equipment. Never has there been a fleet the world over to have communications like this one. Not only did these ships communicate regularly through the Department of Transport stations such as Camperdown VCS, but it also maintained contact with the Navy via Halifax Radio CFH or their ships direct. Above and beyond this the Mounted Police at this time had a point-to-point radiotelegraph system in service between all their major centres, using licensed radio operators. These ships, equipped with radio operators, were capable of communicating on these frequencies. The station at "H" Division Headquarters in Halifax had call sign XJA88. "H" Division is the province of Nova Scotia, "L" Division the province of Prince Edward Island, and "J" Division is the province of New Brunswick, and so on across the country. Each Division Headquarters was fitted with this radiotelegraph system and a number of Sub-Divisions were also fitted. Sydney, Nova Scotia, for example, is a Sub-Division within "H" Division. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, had call sign XJD85. I operated XJD85 for one year from 1972 until 1973. All the Mounted Police radio station call signs had three letters and two digits. The prefix was XJ.



R. J. "Dick" Roscoe

This is the Radio Corporation of America AR-88 Receiver that was the receiving companion of the famous AT-3 Transmitter. This one is on display at the Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa, Ontario.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

AT-3 Transmitter

The first use made of radio communications by various units of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was in the form of broadcasts over the regular public broadcasting stations. This was eventually up-graded to an AM broadcast via their own transmitters on their own frequencies just above the AM broadcast band. Many of their patrol cars were fitted with these fix-tuned receivers, and a few were actually capable of two-way communications via this AM equipment. This is an interior view of one of the transmitter sites in 1948. The Radio Corporation of America AT-3 transmitter is being used for the AM broadcasts at Brandon, Saskatoon, Swift Current, or Calgary. All four sites were identical and consisted of an eight by ten foot transmitter building. The equipment on the shelf is one of the first FM receivers in service in the RCMP. A technician could receive on the FM receiver and obtain any communication while transmitting via the AT-3, that under normal working conditions was remote controlled from the RCMP office several miles away. The RCA AT-3 Transmitter was a very popular transmitter in Canada during World War II and for many years after.



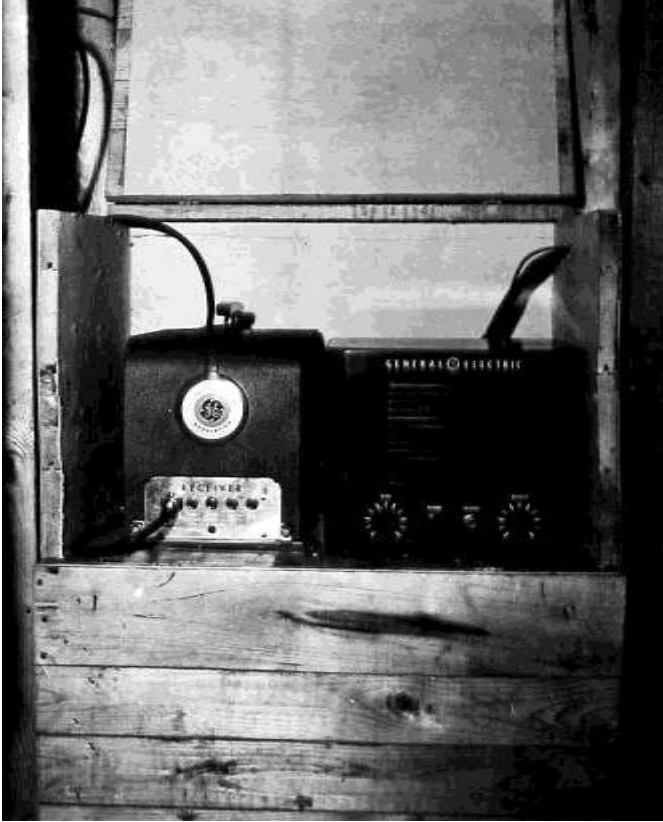
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The RCMP radio station XJD48 at Ottawa, Ontario. The operator on the left is working the radiotelephone position consisting of both VHF FM and HF SSB equipment. The operator on the right is working the HF radiotelegraph circuit.



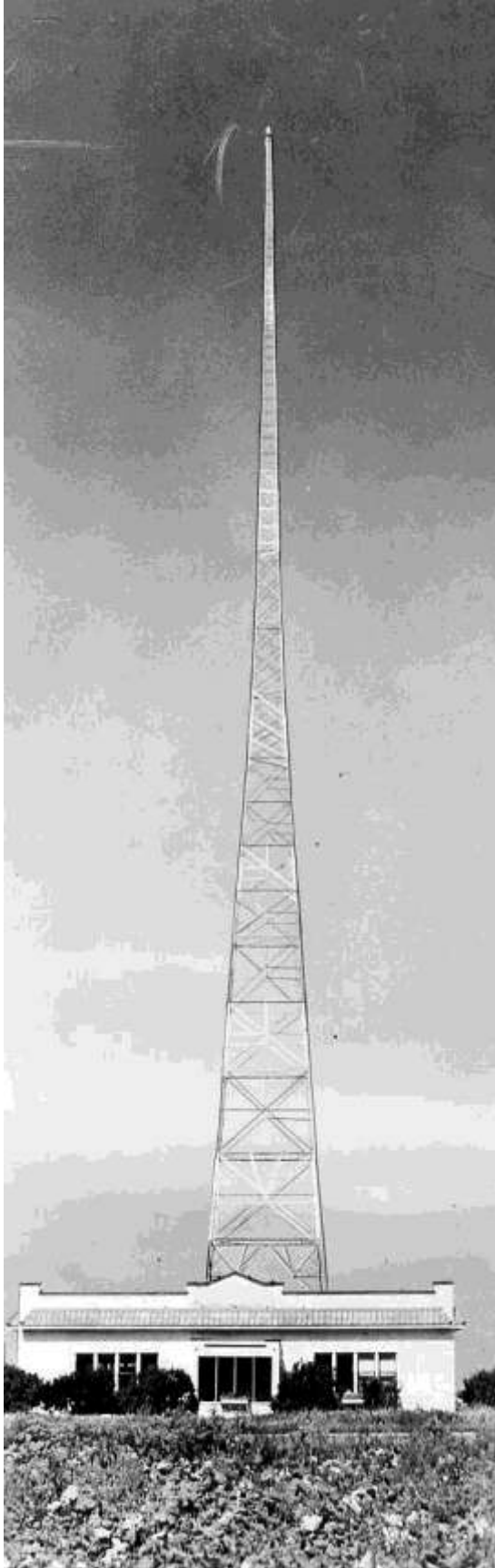
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Radio Station XJD85 Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 1973. This is a more modern view of a Mounted Police Radio Station that has been obsolete for some years. The equipment from left to right is a back view of the computer control link. This provided an up to date criminal record of anyone on file across Canada, a list of stolen vehicles, and many other pieces of information necessary in the operation of a large police force. The next unit is a regular telex terminal that anyone could have rented from CN/CP Telecommunications, and is the unit that terminated the point-to-point radiotelegraph communications the Mounted Police once maintained across the country. The next Teletype unit is a point-to-point radioteletype circuit for the various detachments making up "L" Division, or the province of Prince Edward Island. The telephone is a regular telephone coming from a main switchboard in another office across from this room. The two units, mounted one above the other, are two very high frequency (around 155 megaHertz) radiotelephone transceivers made by General Electric. The two large microphones are used in conjunction with these transceivers for communications with all units within "L" Division. Those out of normal VHF range could be contacted via one of a number of VHF repeaters. The small microphone is used in conjunction with the smaller transceiver to the right of the two General Electrics. This unit is a Canadian Marconi CH125 Single Sideband High Frequency Transceiver that is fix-tuned to the old radiotelegraph frequencies that were used by the Mounted Police. The last unit is a standard typewriter.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

This is one of the first FM receivers placed in service with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. These receivers operated on a frequency of 49 megaHertz. The transmitter was identical in size and appearance to the unit on the left that was used as both a base station and a mobile station. The transmitter was mounted in the trunk of the patrol cars and was remotely operated from the driving position.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

This is one of the first FM radio towers in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police communications network. This is the 404-foot tower near Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1948, and was the tallest tower in service at that time.

Radio Station XJA88 in "H" Division Headquarters was located on Hollis and George Streets in downtown Halifax. Like so many others this station used radiotelegraph until these Mounted Police stations replaced radiotelegraph with a standard telex machine anyone could rent from Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Telecommunications. For secrecy they used a scrambling device they obtained from the Armed Forces and had this on a separate telex machine in a separate room. This room was made as secure as possible and was often checked for any illicit listening device. The Canadian Police Information Computer (CPIC – pronounced "Sea Pick") replaced the telex equipment in the 1970's.

The radiotelegraph equipment at XJA88 was manufactured by the Wilcox Company in the state of Missouri, U.S.A., and was located at Hartlen Point on the eastern side of the approaches to Halifax harbour. The equipment was operated in Division Headquarters via regular telephone lines leased from the Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company. The frequencies used for radiotelegraph were retained by the Mounted Police and used as Single Side-band radiotelephone frequencies, but seldom used other than in certain isolated areas.

Some of the sea-going radio operators had Amateur Radio Licenses and this equipment was used extensively. Ed Hartling became a technician with this organization around 1950 and was kept busy upgrading the regular police equipment. This involved installing the old six-meter equipment (around 49 megahertz). Ed retired shortly after this task was completed with the rank of Sergeant. Up until his death he was heard on the Amateur Radio Bands with call sign VE1AIF. Many amateurs will remember him as net control collecting the weather early each morning from around eastern Canada and the U.S.A. on the Weather Net at 3770 kHz.

Another well-known Mounted Police Marine Division radio operator was the late John Stevens who retired in 1968 with the rank of Staff Sergeant, the highest rank one could attain and remain a radio operator. John was an Amateur Radio Operator for many years with call sign VE1RX. He used this call sign from RCMP MCBRIEN for awhile and at one point had call sign VE0MP while in these ships. A / was placed through the zero to distinguish it from the letter O and the zero on our typewriters and telex machines printed it that way. We used to put a horizontal bar through the letter Z as well so we would not mistake it for the digit 2. I see where it has become common to see a bar through the digit 7 but I have no idea for what reason. The VE1 amateur prefix signifies the province of Nova Scotia. The VE zero-prefix is assigned to an amateur station fitted in a Canadian ship.



Staff Sergeant Ben Colp Royal Canadian Mounted Police Marine Division
The radio room in RCMP IRVINE 1950



Staff Sergeant Ben Colp Royal Canadian Mounted Police Marine Division

Left to right: Ben Colp, Bob Bell and Irwin Beatty in the radio room of RCMP IRVINE 1950



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP IRVINE



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP MACBRIEN

RCMP MCBRIEN was the former HMCS TROIS RIVIERES and like the other former naval vessels retained her Navy radio equipment. The Mounted Police operators removed the four-frequency channel control unit from the PV500 transmitters to permit the transmitter to tune to any frequency by setting the taps directly. MCBRIEN's SMR3 receiver was changed to a CSR5, the latter was not as broad band as the former. She also had a Marconi FR12 transceiver and a Marconi MDF5 direction finder. While John sailed in this ship he had station VCS take many bearings of his transmissions, which they used for navigation. All of these RCMP ships called in twice daily, at 8 AM and 4 PM with routine position reports. They generally did this via their own stations, the ones with the XJ prefix.

John could remember some fascinating experiences while in this fleet. Those he related to me were most interesting, but the one time he had trouble raising Halifax Radio CFH from the Hudson Strait appealed to me most. I spent some time in the Arctic both on Aeradio Stations and in ships. I am sure you would have to experience these conditions to fully understand them. John finally gave up trying to reach an East Coast station and decided to give RCMP Winnipeg, Manitoba, XJE53 a call and send his message by them. My experience in the Hudson Strait area left me with the feeling I had more or less a direct pipeline into Winnipeg. At least when you can hear nothing else on the broadcast band, you can hear their broadcast stations. John got an answer from XJE53 on his first call. The duty operator there became rather excited on realizing it was one of the ships and the first thing he asked John was whether or not he was in trouble. The instructors all through radio school stressed the distress procedure to the point this fellow must have felt that if a ship was calling him, it had to be in trouble. John was still laughing about the incident as he told me the story, but he told this operator that he was not in trouble other than he could not contact Halifax and wanted him to relay some messages through to Halifax for him. Naturally this operator did this gladly and no doubt still remembers the episode. This is just one experience that will give an indication of the tremendous communications capabilities of the RCMP ships.

The Amateur Radio Station was very handy in communicating to isolated villages. These ships did anything and everything, and often carried medical personnel to examine the native people or a complete court of law in order to hold regular court sessions in the various isolated areas of this country. Contacting

one of these villages and advising all those required for any reason meant that considerable time was saved, in that these people did not have to be rounded up on arrival. This meant that these ships could carry out their assigned duties in as little time as possible, and there always seems to be an obliging Ham (Amateur Radio Operator) who will go way out of his way to help.

Some of these ships had lead lined X-ray rooms on board and were capable of examining large groups of people at a time. The sick bays or hospitals in most of them were next to the radio rooms so that they had good communications when needed. It was normal for one of these ships to dash into a small spot on the map, pick up an injured person, and steam full tilt for the nearest medical centre. No one was surprised to find on arrival, the injured person lying in one bunk of the sick bay with a crewmember in another, and “Doc” removing blood from the crewmember for the injured person. This of course was only a small portion of the deeds performed by these ships. They did many things including one or two of the crew walking up and visiting an elderly widow to ensure her pension was sufficient for her to live comfortably in some isolated village.

The crews had the full law of the country behind them and if they caught anyone breaking these laws they could make an arrest on the spot. Then bring the wrongdoer in, tow him in, or contact the nearest patrol car and have it collect him on a nearby beach. The humanitarian deeds performed by this fleet are beyond one’s imagination. The most stupid mistake Canada ever made was letting this fleet disappear. The reason for this is very simple and quite clear. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police was run by police officers, those promoted from the regular policemen (land force). They had a tradition of looking upon the Marine Division as so much “Horse Feed”. At one point and time just one ship in the Marine Division was worth more monetarily than every patrol car the force owned. Since the operation of this fleet necessitated a large budget it is quite understandable that the others looked upon this money as something they should have for their operation. The powers that be wanted to create another empire called the Canadian Coast Guard and it took little initiative on the part of either side to get together on the subject. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Marine Division was eliminated, officially a closed book on July 1st, 1975, although it had been slowly falling to pieces for a few years prior to that date.





Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP FORT STEELE

The remaining RCMP vessels were turned over to other government departments. The Coast Guard received the RCMP WOOD. They renamed her CCGS DARING and she retained her CGMW call sign. Her beautiful RCA radio station was distributed among the Coast Guard fleet for spare parts. The Coast Guard used her as a rescue vessel with radiotelephone only. When the Coast Guard was finished with her she was sold privately. In September 1987 she was arrested and seized at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, for taking on 2,375 kilograms of cocaine that had been flown to Guatemala from Columbia.

Most of these former RCMP vessels were turned over to the naval portion of the Armed Forces for training vessels for the Reserve Naval personnel. RCMP FORT STEELE became HMCS FORT STEELE. The Armed Forces had trouble in deciding whether her call sign was CYMQ or should remain CGMQ. They finally settled on CGMQ.

The former RCMP vessels involved a number of small vessels they called Detachment Class. One was RCMP ACADIAN with call sign CGMV. She became HMCS ACADIAN with call sign CGNH. She was small with dimensions of 65 feet x 15 feet x 4 feet with a displacement of 48 tons. She disappeared on the Armed Forces on September 4th, 1978. Her overdue message was a broadcast stating she was RCMP and of course with the CGNH call sign no one knew what in hell they were looking for. Eventually she came wallowing home to the flock and nothing but sweat was lost. If the powers that be had issued these call signs permanently and randomly from the international blocks of call signs we that had to use the call signs would not have experienced so much confusion from them.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP CAPTOR

When the Marine Division terminated in 1975 it contained three classes of patrol boat called the Detachment Class. Most of them were named after the various Mounted Police Detachments around the country. The three were the 75 foot Patrol Boat, the 65 foot Patrol Boat and the 55 foot Patrol Boat. This is the second RCMP CAPTOR. She is a good example of these Patrol Boats, a 65-foot Patrol Boat to be precise and she was based at Quebec City, Quebec, and was assigned pendant number MP50. I find it rather strange that the Mounted Police did not use a steel forty-footer so popular with the United States Coast Guard, the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Coast Guard. The Mounted Police used these three wooden boats and turned many of them over to the Armed Forces on termination of the Marine Division in 1975. This RCMP CAPTOR became HMCS CAPTOR and was assigned call sign CGLN. All of these boats turned over to the Armed Forces were assigned four letter naval call signs, painted North Atlantic naval gray and assigned pendant numbers with the prefix 19. HMCS CAPTOR was 193 and HMCS ACADIAN, mentioned above, was the second RCMP ACADIAN and when transferred to the Armed Forces was assigned pendant 194. The Armed Forces used them as Reserve Naval training vessels.

THE MARITIME COASTAL DEFENCE VESSELS (MCDV)

The Armed Forces replaced their small vessels for Reserve Navy training with a fleet they call the Maritime Coastal Defense Vessels or a Kingston Class Mine Warfare Vessel. Some of the vessels that were replaced were over forty years old and included Gate Vessels, Minesweepers, Coast Guard Patrol Vessels called Cutters, and the former RCMP vessels. The Maritime Coastal Defense Vessels or Kingston Class Mine Warfare Vessels:

700	CGJX	HMCS KINGSTON
701	CGAU	HMCS GLACE BAY
702	CGAV	HMCS NANAIMO
703	CGAW	HMCS EDMONTON
704	CGAX	HMCS SHAWINIGAN

705	CGAZ	HMCS WHITEHORSE
706	CGAY	HMCS YELLOWKNIFE
707	CGBV	HMCS GOOSE BAY
708	CGJC	HMCS MONCTON
709	CGJG	HMCS SASKATOON
710	CGJI	HMCS BRANDON
711	CGJJ	HMCS SUMMERSIDE

They “make their number” especially while going in and out of port. Their international call signs are not listed in the International Telecommunication Publication “List of Ship Stations”. It is probably better to not list them rather than list them and not build them as in the case of the Bird Class Patrol Vessels. I have seen their international call sign painted down the outside of the bridge in flags. That would probably be “make your number permanently”. It looked rather neat and it left no room for error if one was in a hurry to “make their number”. I have seen several ships paint their call sign in flags on a flag locker or inside the bridge where it could be seen easily, but most ships used to have the hoist made up and ready to go to avoid confusion and save time. Naval vessels are the only ships that still follow this practice. It has been years since a merchant ship “made her number”. It has been a long time since the last merchant vessel dipped her ensign to a warship. This was always done when a merchant ship met a warship. It is a shame this etiquette and colour has been terminated. It all was rather exciting and seemed to add so much to ships and all that pertained to ships. I always felt that half the entries in the List of Ship Stations were superfluous. If the Canadian Government could list ships and not build them think of what the Flag of Convenience countries could do. I found several ships listed at least twice over the years. They had changed flags and were listed as present as well as previous lists of radio detail. Now that there are no radio officers the International Telecommunication Union probably simply lists ships for their satellite detail.

THE CANADIAN PATROL FRIGATES (CPF)

The Armed Forces replaced the Destroyer Escorts with twelve Canadian Patrol Frigates that are also known as City Class Patrol Frigates or a Halifax Class Frigate.

330	CGAP	HMCS HALIFAX
331	CGAR	HMCS VANCOUVER
332	CGAC	HMCS VILLE DE QUEBEC
333	CGAD	HMCS TORONTO
334	CGAE	HMCS REGINA
335	CGAF	HMCS CALGARY
336	CGAG	HMCS MONTREAL
337	CGAN	HMCS FREDERICTON
338	CGAI	HMCS WINNIPEG
339	CHAJ	HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN
340	CGAK	HMCS ST JOHN'S
341	CGAL	HMCS OTTAWA

A few of these ships, the City Class and Maritime Coastal Defense Vessels made an occasional telephone call through the VCS station before it closed, but none made contact via radiotelegraph. There would be no one on board capable of making such a contact. If there was one capable they learned how to make such a contact via Amateur Radio. The one thing I did learn from these vessels is that they are capable of a radiotelephone conversation on VHF channel 26 in full duplex. In other words they spoke as though on a regular telephone and did not have to turn the transmitter off in order to receive the person on the shore end of the conversation. That feature must be rather expensive and would have involved a special antenna.

These twelve CPF ships got off to a rather rough start with their call signs. All twelve were assigned a call sign from CHAA down the alphabet to CHAL inclusive. Someone must have jumped on the authorities and pointed out to them that nearly all those call signs were already issued to various common Broadcast Stations across Canada, and these broadcast stations had held them for years. It is a wonder they were not

issued the call sign of the ship of the same name they replaced, as they did with the 280 Class destroyers. Not likely anyone thought of it or knew where to look for them. It was all a bit ridiculous no matter what way you look at it.

THE SUBMARINES

There have been several submarines serve in the Royal Canadian Navy over the years. There were four during World War I, but I have not found any information on a wireless station fitted in any of them. There was a small spark station fitted in a corner of the torpedo room but I have no detail on it. These four were hardly used when all four were sold for scrap. The first two actually sailed from the West Coast to the East Coast, with a mother ship, and the last two sailed from the Eastern United States to Bermuda and on to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The four with their dates of service were:

HMCS CC1	1914-1920
HMCS CC2	1914-1920
HMCS CH14	1918-1922
HMCS CH15	1918-1922

The next submarines to serve in the Royal Canadian Navy were the two German Submarines that surrendered to the Royal Canadian Navy in May 1945. These two were commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy for tests and evaluation.

HMCS U190
HMCS U889

U889 was turned over to the United States Navy after these tests and evaluation. U190 was sunk near the position where she had sunk the diesel Bangor Minesweeper HMCS ESQUIMALT in April 1945. I was unable to locate the call signs assigned to these two while members of the Royal Canadian Navy.

The Royal Canadian Navy more or less specialized in anti-submarine warfare and this involved a lot of training with submarines. Canada used submarines provided by the Royal Navy for this training. One of my first jobs in the navy was to take some batteries down aboard one of these British submarines. I managed to slop some battery acid down the front of my shirt and pants that soon ate holes in these clothes. Welcome to the Navy!

In 1961 Canada got another submarine. Canada got this one from the pre-owned United States naval fleet, a former Balao Class Submarine, the former USS BURRFISH. She became HMCS GRILSE and the second Canadian naval ship to bear that name. She was assigned pendant number 71.

In 1968 Canada replaced this submarine with another former American boat the USS ARGONAUT. USS ARGONAUT had call sign NYDH and Radiotelephone "Top Gallant". The Royal Canadian Navy named this one HMCS RAINBOW and she was the second Canadian warship to hold that name. She was assigned pendant number 75. They both served on the West Coast and both retained their American radio equipment according to a former submariner.

71	CGKZ	HMCS GRILSE
75	CGNE	HMCS RAINBOW

In 1965 the Royal Canadian Navy finally got three new submarines of her own for the East Coast. These three were new Oberon Class boats purchased from and built in the United Kingdom.

71	CZFQ	HMCS OJIBWA
72	CGNQ	HMCS ONONDAGA
73	CGLM	HMCS OKANAGAN

In 1989 Canada purchased a pre-owned British sister to these vessels that was left docked in Halifax and used as a training vessel. It was commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy to a point but I do not think it was far enough to rate a Canadian international call sign.

S12 GDBH HMS OLYMPUS

The Royal Canadian Navy started to replace these four in April 1998 with four pre-owned low mileage British Upholder Class submarines. The British Navy built these submarines between 1986 and 1993 and all four had been laid up since 1994. The Canadian Navy has renamed these four Victoria Class Submarines. They are, with date first commissioned, British Call Sign, pendant number and Name, and their new Canadian pendant number, call sign and name:

1990	GABR	---	HMS UPHOLDER	SS879	CGCI	HMCS CHICOUTIMI
1991	GACB	---	HMS UNSEEN	SS876	CGVA	HMCS VICTORIA
1992	GACC	S42	HMS URSULA	SS878	CYCB	HMCS CORNER BROOK
1993	GACD	S43	HMS UNICORN	SS877	CZWR	HMCS WINDSOR

I was unable to locate two British pendant numbers. Jane's list those two only in a 1994 publication of theirs.

HMCS VICTORIA arrived at Halifax from Northern England on October 23rd, 2000.

HMCS WINDSOR arrived at Halifax after a two-week voyage from Northern England on October 19th, 2001, a year behind schedule due to some problem with a fuel leak.

HMCS VICTORIA is based on the West Coast and the other three are on the East Coast. These four are diesel boats and the reason Canada got a deal on them. The Royal Navy wanted to make their submarine fleet completely nuclear. These four have been fitted with Canadian communications equipment. The Navy called us, and wanted to know if we could make contact with one of their destroyers for one of their admirals, when I was on duty at station VCS one day. We trust this equipment is more reliable. It is pretty bad when an admiral does not have immediate contact with one or all of his ships.

HMCS CORNER BROOK arrived in Halifax on March 10th, 2003.

HMCS CHICOUTIMI left the Royal Navy Submarine Base at Faslane, Scotland for Halifax and experienced a fire on board on October 5th, 2004, off the coast of Ireland. Nine crewmen suffered smoke inhalation and three were airlifted to hospital, including Lieut. Chris Saunders, 32, who died on the way. HMCS CHICOUTIMI was towed back to Faslane and was welded on the deck of the heavy lift Norwegian ship EIDE TRANSPORTER. The EIDE TRANSPORTER arrived in Halifax on Tuesday, February 1st, 2005. HMCS CHICOUTIMI was towed to her berth at HMC Dockyard on Friday, February 4th, 2005.

THE PARK FLEET AFTER WORLD WAR II

One has to admit the Royal Canadian Navy with help from several other Navies, did an excellent job of shepherding this important fleet, the Park Ships, back and forth across the Atlantic during hostilities. Only four of these ships were lost because of enemy action.

The 4700-ton dry cargo ship AVONDALE PARK became the last British casualty of the war when she was torpedoed on May 7th, 1945, one-mile southeast of May Island, Firth of Forth. The 10,000-ton dry cargo ship JASPER PARK was a member of convoy ONS154, the convoy that nearly died, and was reported torpedoed on December 28th, 1942. This proved an error due to confusion and she went on to serve fleet and country another six months. Her luck ran out on July 6th, 1943, when she was sunk by a torpedo southeast of Durban at 3252S 4215E. The POINT PLEASANT PARK, a 10,000 ton dry cargo ship, mentioned elsewhere on these pages, was lost on February 23rd, 1945, when torpedoed by U-510 northwest of Capetown at 2942S 0958E. U-510 finished her off with gunfire as her last torpedo had failed to sink her.

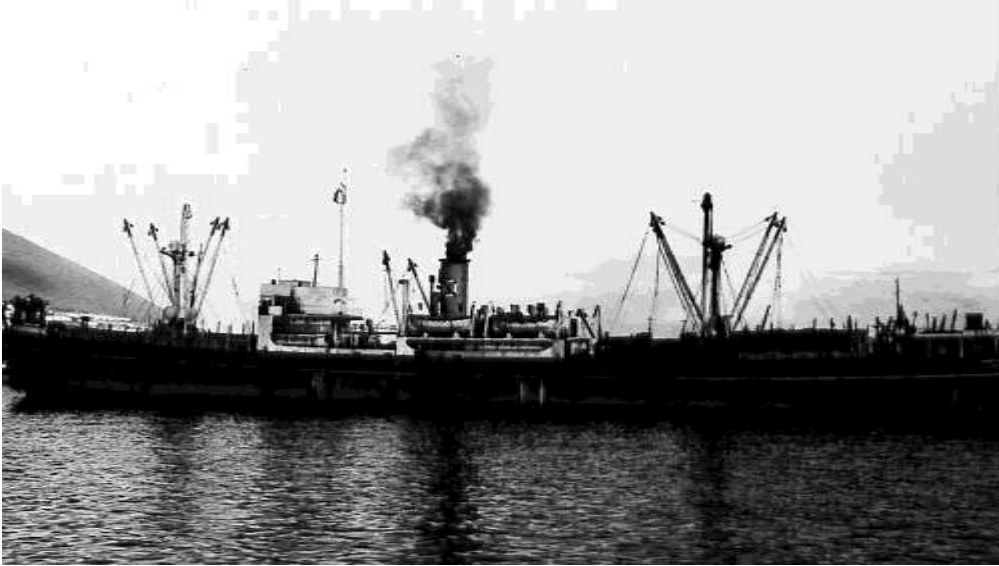
The TABOR PARK was sunk March 13th, 1945, southeast of Yarmouth, England at 5222N 0153E by a midget submarine. TABOR PARK was a 4700-ton dry cargo ship.

You will agree that these figures are most impressive, but had this fleet been in operation at the outbreak of the war in 1939 the final figures would have been much different. This fleet was a latecomer to the war and did a fine job of assisting in moving the fence back where it belonged. The merchant fleets that built the fence had a much different story to tell.

Each of these one hundred seventy ships that survived this war has a very interesting personal history. (Two other Parks were lost from the normal hazards associated with working such a large fleet to the limits.) Like many of the warships these Parks came up on the auction block for disposal as soon after termination of the war as possible. It is difficult trying to describe these one hundred seventy ships. On termination of the war everyone was so glad to see the end of such a horrible existence that the Fort Class Merchant Ship and the Parks, which were the same ship, were all lumped together and sold from the same auction block. Many of the ships I have been told over the years were Parks, were actually Forts. The two are so intermarried that in order to do an accurate description, you would have to take each individual hull and trace it through from beginning to end. Canada produced 456 merchant ships during this war and at least ninety were Fort Class, supposedly sold to the United States who in turn loaned them to the United Kingdom on lend-lease. Some Forts started out as Parks and some Parks started out as Forts and it can be confusing.

Some of these ships were purchased in Halifax. The records of many of our sailing vessels indicate a number were named for members of this family. I. H. Mathers and Son Limited, purchased sixty-five of these Park/Fort ships. They retained fifteen, named them for counties and operated these fifteen through a branch company named Acadia Overseas Freighters Limited. The other fifty were operated under the flag of the United Kingdom with British crews.

Name	Became	Call Sign
FORT LENNOX	CARIBOU COUNTY	----
FORT VENANGO	COLCHESTER COUNTY	VGKR
FORT PRUDHOMME	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	VGFP
FORT LA BAYE	DIGBY COUNTY	----
LAKEVIEW PARK	HALIFAX COUNTY	VGVR
FORT KASKASKIA	HANTS COUNTY	----
KILDONAN PARK	INVERNESS COUNTY	VDTK
FORT YUKON	NANAIMO COUNTY	----
FORT BRISEBOIS	PICTOU COUNTY	----
RIVERVIEW PARK	SHELBURNE COUNTY	VDSC
FORT WALLACE	VANCOUVER COUNTY	----
FRONTENAC PARK	VICTORIA COUNTY	VCLC
FORT KULLYSPELL	WESTMINSTER COUNTY	VGKT
FORT ST. REGIS	YALE COUNTY	VGNK
FORT ASTORIA	YARMOUTH COUNTY	----



World Ship Society

SS DIGBY COUNTY

The Acadia Overseas Freighters Limited fleet lasted only long enough for half of them to get published in the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations, but none-the-less was an honest attempt at becoming a Canadian fleet. The most interesting communications story within this fleet involved the WESTMINSTER COUNTY with call sign VGKT.

Most radio operators who were friends would naturally have a chat now and then when the opportunity presented itself. Bill Ling became Radio Officer in VGKT and ran back and forth across the pond to the Mediterranean and Africa. At this time Frank Burns was the radio operator at the radio beacon station located on Seal Island, off the southwestern tip of Nova Scotia. Frank's radio beacon equipment permitted him to work on 500 kilohertz (the distress and calling frequency), and also on a working frequency that permitted him to communicate with ships.

The operators who knew each other over the air knew the signature of their fists and therefore they simply sat back and rattled the radiotelegraph code from one to the other. Each and every telegraph operator had a distinct style of transmitting, more pronounced with some than others. Most countries throughout the world monitored the complete radio spectrum and kept track of all the operators from this signature. This is the main reason I was so tensed-up while transmitting. This simple fact has produced some interesting history on this subject. Possibly one of the best incidents involved the Japanese naval fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, bringing the United States into World War II. Just before this Japanese fleet sailed we are told they replaced every radio operator in the fleet with hope of adding some confusion to those monitoring this activity. At least this was the rumour for many years. The book "Day of Deceit" by Robert B. Stinnett ISBN 0-684-85339-6 will give one all the detail they will ever want on this communications. Mr. Stinnett spent 16 years researching for this book and I have spent many hours reading and enjoying the excellent detail he recorded. The United States naval radiomen he records would have become communication technicians in 1948. This was the same trade I joined in the Canadian navy.

Getting back to the story – Bill and Frank had known each other for sometime and while Bill was wallowing along through the Atlantic towards Europe he decided to give Frank a call and have a chat with him. The Seal Island call sign was VGY and the result of this chat became rather interesting to say the least. The similarity between VGY and VGKT will be rather obvious to anyone who knows the continental code. The letter Y is a dah-dot-dah-dah. The letter K is a dah-dot-dah and the letter T is a dah. Since both have the VG prefix and you rattle them off without paying special attention you inevitably wind up calling yourself, sending VGY for the station being called and signing VGY as the station doing the calling.

Shortly after Bill's first call to Frank a ship nearby broke in and asked him why he was calling himself. Naturally when Frank went back to Bill some enterprising soul along the Nova Scotia coast sat down and wrote George Harris and told him Frank had been on Seal Island long enough because he was calling himself. George, who was more or less in complete charge of all the stations in the area, naturally wrote Frank. Frank, because he was Frank, did little to clear up the matter. He answered George and told him he had not been on Seal Island long enough to call himself, but when he felt he had, George would be the first to know.

On learning this detail I mentioned it to a number of the older operators. Most had heard the story, few knew the facts, and one explanation was more ridiculous than that of Frank sitting there calling himself. This one claimed the operator at Seal Island was green and rather bored with things in general and decided to answer the ships calling La Guaira Radio YVG in Venezuela. A VGY sent rather recklessly can easily become YVG. YVG could be heard loud and clear during the hours of darkness on 500 kHz.



David Vail VE1GM

This is the radio beacon at Seal Island, Nova Scotia, with call sign VGY. The transmitters are Cossor Transmitters operating on 308 kiloHertz.

We had to be able to copy the continental code at twenty words per minute in order to pass our examinations for our radio certificates. We were supposed to transmit at sixteen words per minute when handling distress messages or broadcasts, anything important. The reason for this was to give any new operators a chance to get a solid copy. The late Frank Burns had trouble with speed. His sixteen words per minute would be closer to twenty-six.

One morning the night shift at VCS, Ketch Harbour, was sitting back waiting for the day shift to come in and let them go home. Just before it was time for the day shift to arrive they started to hear the siren on a Mounted Police Highway Patrol Car. It kept getting closer and closer and finally came in view with Frank right in front of it coming to work. This Police Car followed Frank right up into the parking lot with one

frustrated Mounted Police Constable behind the wheel, the lights flashing and the siren wailing. When Frank stopped in his parking spot, this frustrated Highway Patrol member jumped out slapping his ticket book on his leg and yelled at Frank “Did you not hear my siren and see my lights flashing?” Like I say, Frank was Frank and he did nothing to improve this situation either. Frank goes “Humph, every Pizza Wagon in town has a siren and flashing lights like that!” Oh no, you should not have said that Frank. Needless to say Frank was lucky he lost his driver’s licence for one week only and had to catch a ride back and forth to work with a member of his shift. Frank’s driving speed was like his code speed, a notch or more above the limit.

Poor Frank did not have a very good retirement. He retired a few years before the station closed. Shortly after he retired he fell through the doorstep on his cottage out at Trout Lake. He was hurt quite bad and did not fully recover when he died a few years later. A shame, he did not deserve that and was a nice guy to work with as one can imagine.

Getting back to the Park Ships; many of the Fort ships were returned to the United States Maritime Commission and went on from there to trade throughout the world, under various flags and with various call signs. Some of the Fort and many of the Park ships were placed under the British flag and owned in the United Kingdom after the war. For a brief example of a few, I will list the detail I found on the ones that some former members of the VCS station sailed in during the war.

The late Leo Irwin:

10,000 ton, dry cargo built at United Shipyards Limited, Montreal, Quebec, and launched on May 11th, 1944.

VGGZ	HILLCREST PARK	1944	Canada
GLZT	HILLCREST PARK	1946	United Kingdom
GLZT	BEMBRIDGE HILL	1950	United Kingdom
5LLN	ELIMARIE	1957	Liberia
----	TAI FONG	1965	

Scrapped at Taiwan 1968



Public Archives Canada PA – 117638

SS HILLCREST PARK with call sign GZLT. The photograph was taken in 1949 when the vessel was registered at London, England.

Stan Cairns:

10,000 ton, dry cargo built at Marine Industries Limited, Sorel, Quebec, and launched on August 24th, 1943.

VD TJ	ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK	1943	Canada
GNDG	ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK	1946	United Kingdom
GNDG	WYNCHWOOD HILL	1950	United Kingdom

Broken up at Nagasaki, Japan 1959

The late Gus Crewe:

10,000 ton, dry cargo built at United Shipyards Limited, Montreal, Quebec, and launched on June 22nd, 1944.

VDDD	MOUNT ORFORD PARK	1944	Canada
GLZX	MOUNT ORFORD PARK	1946	United Kingdom
GLZX	ORFORD	1950	United Kingdom
5LBF	CAPE RION	1956	Liberia
----	VISAYAN MERCHANT	1964	
----	MARY M	1965	
HOAM	LOYAL GARLANDS	1967	Panama

Broken up at Taiwan 1970

10,000 ton, dry cargo built Burrard Dry Dock Company Limited, North Vancouver, British Columbia, and launched on January 31st, 1945.

VCMM	FAIRMOUNT PARK	1945	Canada
VCMM	MONTREAL CITY	1946	Canada
SPOS	HUTA BAILDON	1959	Poland

Converted for use as a floating warehouse some time previous to 1970 Last reported owner was the Polish Government. Unable any further detail.

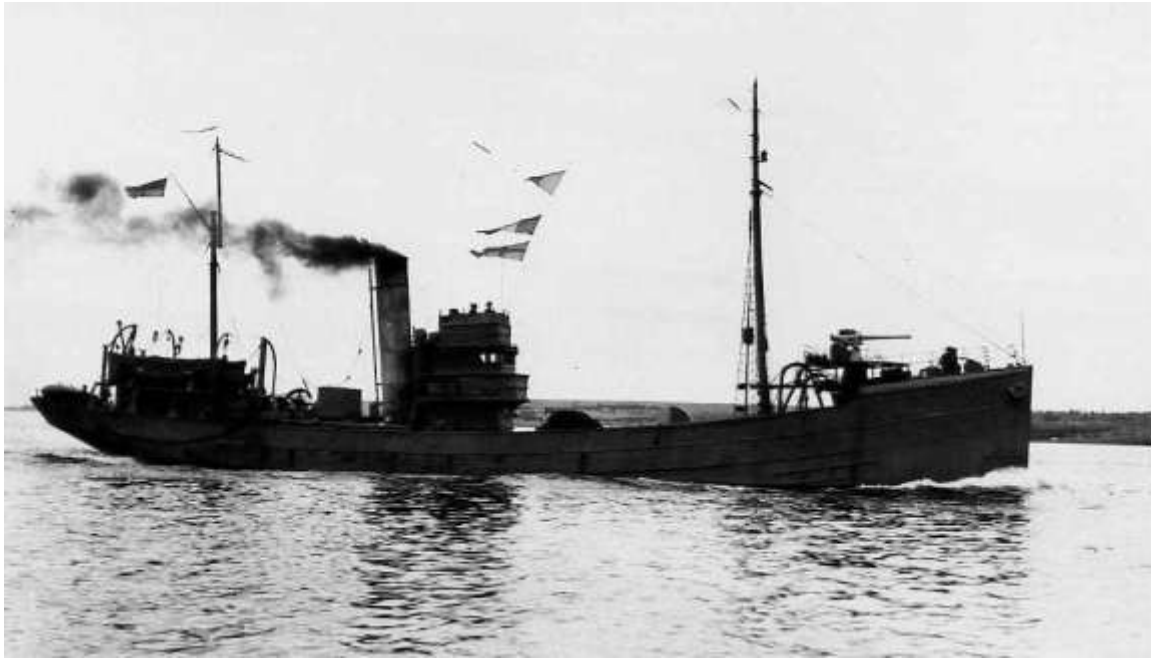
4,700 ton, dry cargo built by Davie Shipbuilding and Repair Company Limited, Lauzon, Quebec, and launched on August 5th, 1943.

VDZB	CAMP FARNHAM	1943	Canada
VDZB	DUFFERIN PARK	1943	Canada
VDZB	DUFFERIN BELL	1946	Canada

DUFFERIN BELL made her last voyage in May 1951 still under the Canadian flag. On termination of the war she was purchased by private interests and used for general trading, mainly in the area of eastern Canada. In May 1951, she departed Halifax, Nova Scotia, bound for the St. Lawrence River and on May 15th, 1951, she struck and became a total loss at Framboise Cove, Cape Breton, while sailing in heavy fog. The Captain claimed the reason he was so far off course and lost the ship, was due to the fact his Radio Officer gave him inaccurate radio direction finding bearings. The Radio Officer apparently cleared himself by proving he had insisted on having the Direction Finder calibrated prior to their leaving Halifax, and that the Captain failed to grant this request. This is a most fascinating story concerning the history of marine communications for this area, but I was unable to locate any further detail on the incident. Had the records of this incident been held anywhere other than a Canadian government office, I would have had a much better chance of learning the full details.

The only thing I learned worthy of mention is that Framboise is the French word for Raspberry. Realizing this, an otherwise bleak cove takes on a more colourful impression, especially when it is looked at in terms of cotton dresses and straw hats. There are many such labels that fall into this same category. Cape D'Or for example is a combination of English and French. D'Or is the French word for Gold and any who have seen this Cape especially at sunset will agree it is well named. Isle Haute, in the Bay of Fundy, is also well

named and translates into High Island. When Champlain first explored this bay he apparently gave this island its name. Rayon D'Or is French meaning a Golden Ray, like the first golden rays of sunlight in the morning. Therefore, an otherwise bleak fishing vessel takes on a more colourful appearance in the form of National Fish's old trawler RAYON D'OR.



Public Archives Canada S-40

This is National Fish's old trawler RAYON D'OR as she appeared while serving "her hitch" in the navy during World War II.

Years ago sailors were very superstitious and one of the things they felt produced bad luck was to change a ship's name. Most of them must at least twitch in their graves knowing the record of the World War II ships. Not one of the Park ships retained her original name. Many of them were renamed many times. Many were to fly the flag of many countries and it would be hard to find a seafaring country that did not at one time have a Park in her fleet. The majority of these Parks have now been scrapped, or as we used to say in the Navy "We are now shaving with them", meaning the razor blade companies are manufacturing blades from their steel. It will be interesting to see if a Park will equal the record of the old CANADIAN RAIDER of World War I vintage because fifty-six years is a long old haul for the rather poor steel used during the construction of the Park ships.

Recording the complete history of each and every Park, in the one volume, would make for fascinating reading, but the only other portion of the fleet that I want to mention are the five that were renamed with the Canadian prefix. After the war Canadian National Steamships (C.N.S.) had another run at shipping. LADY RODNEY and LADY NELSON, the only Lady Boats to survive the war, were returned to them and the following Parks became part of this fleet:

Name	Became	Call Sign
CARTIER PARK	CANADIAN VICTOR	VCNX
LORNE PARK	CANADIAN LEADER	VCQC
MAISSONEUVE PARK	CANADIAN HIGHLANDER	VCPD
SUTHERLAND PARK	CANADIAN CONQUEROR	VCPV
WESTDALE PARK	CANADIAN OBSERVER	VCMW

In addition to these five ships there were three more and this made a total of eight.

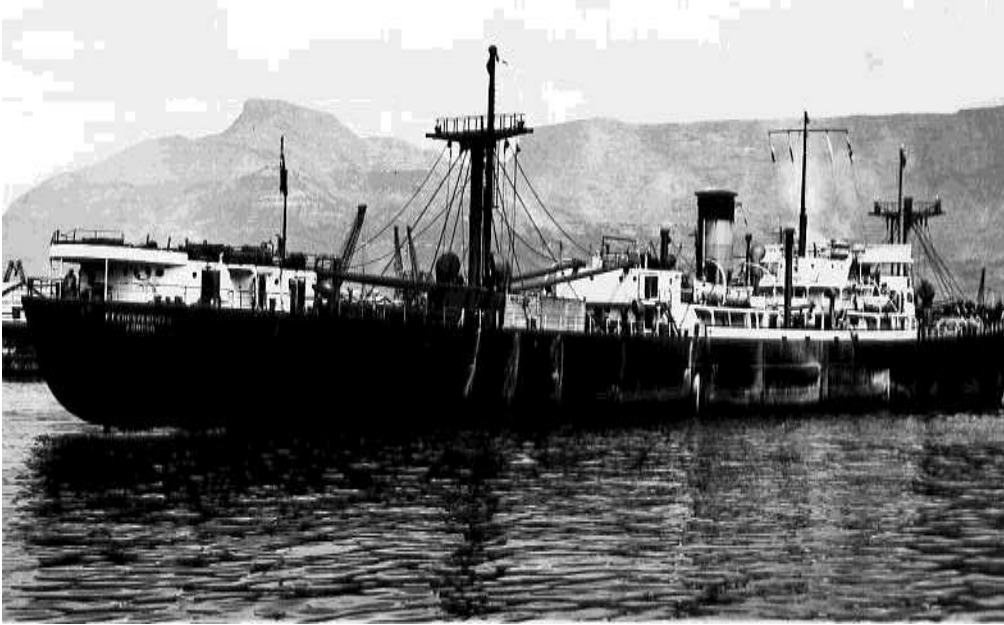
CANADIAN CHALLENGER	VGSK
CANADIAN CONSTRUCTOR	VGBY
CANADIAN CRUISER	VGPZ

The crews in this fleet went on strike about 1950 and as far as I know the strike has never been settled. LADY RODNEY and LADY NELSON went to Egypt. The five Parks were laid up alongside Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in 1957. These five were sold to Cuba in 1958, but this sale was blocked because of the political situation in Cuba and all five were scrapped in 1965. The CANADIAN CHALLENGER visited Eastern Canada during the summer of 1979. She called into the VCS station as the Greek Ship ITALIA with Greek call sign SVNR. The CANADIAN CHALLENGER was built in 1947 and was built for the C.N.S. fleet by Davie Shipbuilding at Lauzon, Quebec.



Paul du Mesnil

This is the CABAHAWK on the Upper Great Lakes in 1967. This is a good example of our World War II ships. This vessel was launched on March 26th, 1943 as the FORT CHESTERFIELD and was registered in Great Britain with call sign BKQP. Great Britain had that block of call signs at that time. In 1949 she became the HAWK and was registered in Panama with call sign HOTQ. She was registered at Nassau, Bahamas, in 1965 and assigned call sign ZIOX and terminated her career at a ship breakers yard in Taiwan in 1968. Paul du Mesnil was the next to the last Radio Officer to serve in her. At this time her radio room had become a regular hodge podge of equipment from modifications made over the twenty-five year life span of the vessel. Her main receiver was a Telefunken. Her main MF and her main HF transmitters were Siemens. The emergency transmitter was Telefunken and the Auto Alarm was Mackay. Her first station may have been a complete Mackay station when she was new. The Automatic Keyer and the Emergency Receiver are not known. The Direction Finder was a Marconi Lodestone III and the Lifeboat Radio was the Marconi Salvita III.



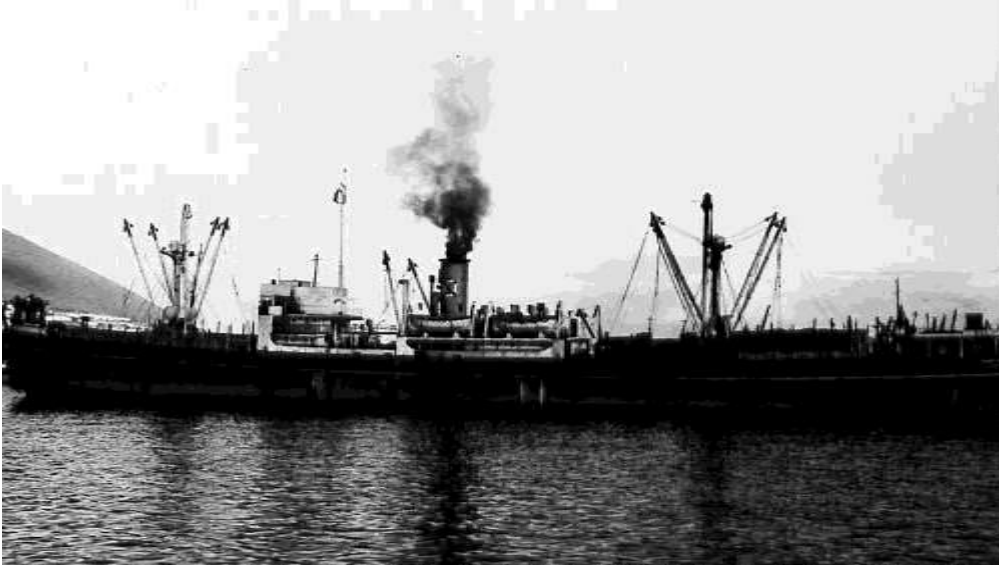
World Ship Society

FORT CHESTERFIELD call sign BKQP



World Ship Society

BEATON PARK shortly after World War II when she was renamed LAKE BABINE and retained her Canadian registry and VDZX call sign in 1946.



World Ship Society

This is FEDERAL VOYAGER with call sign VYQG, the former FORT EDMONTON with call sign MXLR.

THE CHINA COASTERS

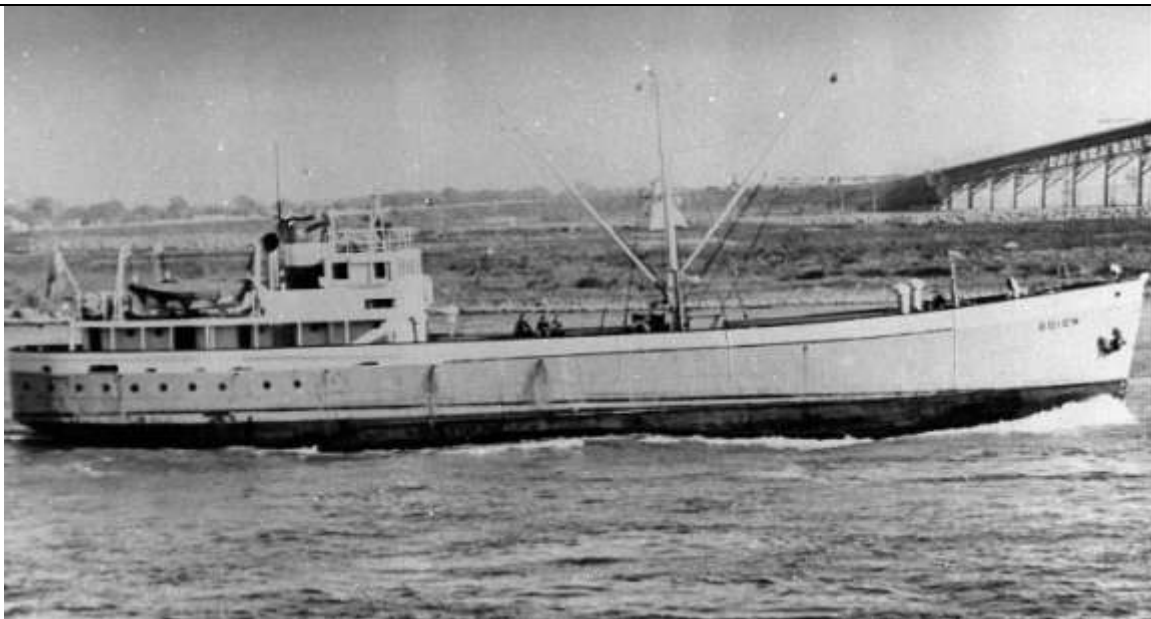
When the Allied military conglomerate succeeded in pushing back this so-called fence to its present place in Europe, they then turned their attention to cleaning up the war in the Pacific. Those in charge of this undertaking felt there would be a need for small shallow draft merchant vessels in order to navigate the shallow waters around the coast in that area. For this reason Canada was to build thirty-five small vessels that were officially known as the B and C type coaster. Our yards on the West Coast were to build the larger B type and gave them the label "China Coaster". This label quickly spread and those who knew them will most likely remember them by that label. The West Coast B type had names with the prefix OTTAWA and every suffix commenced with PA. There were fifteen from OTTAWA PAGE through to OTTAWA PATROL. The East Coast yards built the smaller C type in various yards throughout the Maritimes, Quebec, and the Great Lakes. The twenty of this type all had OTTAWA as the prefix, with MAY this or that as the suffix. They ranged from OTTAWA MAYBANK through to OTTAWA MAYVIEW alphabetically.

Possibly my fascination with the little ships is my main reason for wanting to mention them, but before one was launched the atomic bomb ended the war in the Pacific. All thirty-five were to be fitted with marine radiotelegraph installations that meant they would have communication capabilities on a par with their larger sisters. Many were still in service a few years ago and several still had radiotelegraph capabilities, but they were the few that made it to the China Coast.

These little ships were to fly many of the world's flags over the years. Several were retained under the Canadian flag since the first one was not launched until late 1945 and the last in early 1947. The residents of the Gulf of St. Lawrence area will know OTTAWA MAYSTAR best of all. She was sailing regularly around that area after 1958 as the BRION with call sign VYCF. All those retained by Canadians under the Canadian flag were fitted with radiotelephone only. The B type were 909 gross tons and the C type 300 total deadweight tons, both too small to make radiotelegraph economically feasible in this country.

One of the B-type made a slight ripple in the marine news in 1979. On April 23rd, 1979, OTTAWA PATROL stranded near Posorja while entering Guayaquil, Ecuador, on a voyage from Manta, Ecuador. She was at the time the Panamanian vessel BONBINI with call sign HPAA. But the best of these little ships to we who were in the Canadian Coast Guard was the OTTAWA MAYHILL. She was launched on October 26th, 1946, as the C. P. EDWARDS with call sign CGCP. Mr. Charles Peter Edwards, like so many of our

illustrious government leaders, came from the United Kingdom. He was appointed Superintendent of Wireless Stations in 1909 with the old Department of Marine and Fisheries and was to retire some forty years later as Deputy Minister for Air in the Department of Transport.



M. E. R. Bouffard, Iles de La Madeleine

The C Class China Coaster OTTAWA MAYSTAR as the MV BRION with call sign VYCF

CANADIAN COAST GUARD FLEET

The only ship constructed during the war for what is now called the Canadian Coast Guard was the ERNEST LAPOINTE with call sign CGSZ. She was listed for many years as having limited radiotelegraph capabilities, but I do not know how long she actually carried an operator, perhaps for most of her career. Shortly after the war the Department of Transport fleet was increased by several new ships including three of the Navy's Frigates. At least these three were spared the fate of HMCS PRINCE RUPERT, HMCS DUNVER, and HMCS EASTVIEW, who were stripped and sunk to form a breakwater in Comox Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

But none of these Frigates was to have the illustrious career HMCS STORMONT was to gain. She became the yacht CHRISTINA, the yacht of Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. CHRISTINA was registered in Liberia and held Liberian call sign ELLU and was fully equipped with an ITT Mackay installation. She carried a Radio Officer. CHRISTINA was turned over to the Greek Navy on July 12th, 1978. The Greek Navy did nothing with the ship and let her deteriorate. Sometime around the year 2000 another of the Greek shipping magnates, on a similar social level as Aristotle Onassis, gained control of the ship. He gave the ship a two year refit costing fifty million U.S. dollars. When one quotes that amount of money it makes little difference whether it is U.S. or some other currency. The vessel again entered service in July 2002, as one of the world's foremost personal yachts. She was renamed CHRISTINA O. and was registered in Panama this time. She entered service as a charter yacht and available at from 45,000.00 to 65,000.00 U.S. dollars per day depending on the number of people or guests in the charter. HMCS STORMONT was commissioned on November 27th, 1943. Her original conversion to a yacht took place at Kiel, Germany, from 1952 until 1954. One has to wonder how much of STORMONT is left, but one has to admit that it is pretty good for a sixty year old frigate built during the war when the quality of the material was not that good.

After World War II the passenger aircraft replaced the passenger liner for travel across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. With the advent of this service good weather forecasting was necessary. Actual weather

observations taken on a regular basis had to be performed from various areas of these oceans in order to make these forecasts.

The world's major political powers came together on this idea and Canada was placed in a position of assisting the United States in manning one of these stations. These stations were strung out at various positions throughout both oceans. Each was assigned a letter for identification purposes. The first half of the alphabet became the Atlantic areas and the second half, Pacific areas. Canada and the United States were to share station B. Since this undertaking became the responsibility of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) assigned a block of call signs for their use. This block was that section from 4YA to 4YZ.

The Royal Canadian Navy was to supply a ship for this weather station and they assigned the River Class Frigate HMCS ST. STEPHEN. She carried out these duties on a rotational basis with an American Ship from 1947 to 1950. As the weather branch of the Canadian Government was a part of the Air Section of the Department of Transport (D.O.T.), HMCS ST. STEPHEN carried a few weather observers from this organization with her Navy crew. "Spike" Sullivan one of my Dad's Navy buddies, was Chief Gunnery Instructor (G.I.) in ST. STEPHEN at the time. Spike was to be my drill instructor at HMCS GLOUCESTER several years later on the many official guards we were to form for various dignitaries, from the Queen on down the list. One of these guards was the very first attempt at unification of our Armed Forces and I had the honour to be right marker for this guard. Spike had to be one of the best and most colourful G.I.'s the Navy ever created, but that is another story.

After one of the ICAO meetings Canada was given the job of maintaining station P in the North Pacific and relinquished her half share in station B mentioned above. Three of these River Class Frigates were taken over by the Department of Transport and extensively modified for complete D.O.T. crews. One Frigate was the HMCS ST. STEPHEN, a three-year veteran of station B, and naturally all three were assigned D.O.T. call signs.

STONE TOWN	CGGP
ST. CATHARINES	CGGQ
ST. STEPHEN	CGGR



Canadian Coast Guard

ST. CATHARINES

ST. CATHARINES was the first to take up station in December 1950. She and STONE TOWN provided this service for sixteen years. Although ST. STEPHEN had been converted she was never required. The other two provided the service alone leaving ST. STEPHEN as an emergency backup that was never needed.

This organization was called the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) by the 1970's. The WMO still used the 4YA to 4YZ call signs and was assigned an additional block, C7A to C7Z. The only C call sign I heard used in radiotelegraph was C7H. Station 4YH was using C7H for some unknown reason. I do not know why the WMO needed an additional block of call signs. Each station was identified with a letter and this letter was the suffix of the call sign. There were seventeen stations only so one would assume the 4YA to 4YZ calls would have been sufficient. The seventeen ocean stations were:

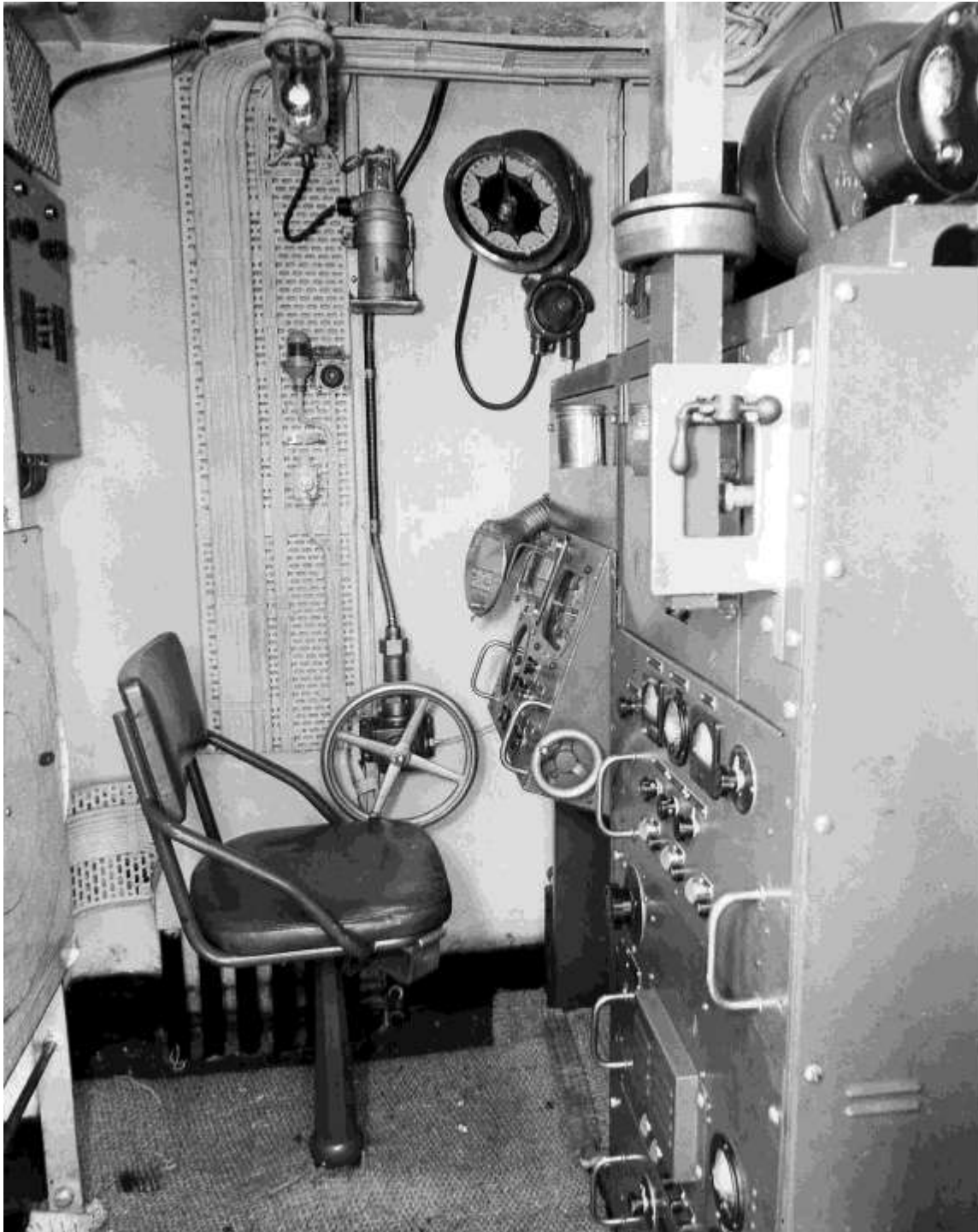
Atlantic Stations:

4YA	62N 33W	USA & Netherlands
4YB	56.3N 51W	USA (& Canada until 1950)
4YC	52.45N 35.3W	USA
4YD	44N 41W	USA
4YE	35N 48W	USA
4YH	36.4N 69.35W	USA
4YI	59N 19W	Great Britain
4YJ	52.3N 20W	Great Britain & Netherlands
4YK	45N 16W	France & Netherlands
4YM	66N 2E	Norway

Pacific Stations:

4YN	32.3N 135W	USA
4YP	50N 145W	Canada
4YQ	43N 167W	USA
4YS	48N 162E	USA
4YU	27.4N 145W	USA
4YV	31N 164E	USA
4YX	39N 153E	Japan

The United States built 98 ships from the plans of the River Class Frigates and called them Patrol Frigates. They were naval ships as in USS but they had U.S. Coast Guard crews. As a matter of fact the first two, PF1 ASHEVILLE and PF2 NATCHEZ were built in Canada. Some of these Patrol Frigates were used as weather vessels during the war. Many vessels assigned these ocean stations after the war were these former Patrol Frigates.



Public Archives Canada HS-0410-16

HMCS MONTREAL's Radar Room February 7th, 1944

Barry Hastings was one of the Radio Officers in the three former Frigates on station P. He describes the Radar equipment better than I can. "The Radar equipment in HMCS MONTREAL was similar to our 277Q Radar on board the River Class Frigates ST. CATHERINES and STONE TOWN, which manned 4YP for many years. (Possibly the identical Radar because Barry did not see the photograph reproduced here.) These Radar were British made as I recall from the description of the photograph and would appear that the operator sat in a chair thusly:-

Antennae Vertical – O
Control

O – Cathode Ray Tube
O – Antennae Horizontal
Control

X
Radio Officer

Thus, operators right hand control would operate the radar sweep, i.e. turn wheel to right, antenna turns clockwise, return to centre position and antenna stops, turn to left and antenna rotates counter clockwise.

Suppose we are “scanning” in a clockwise direction, (surface scan for warship targets) – target appears, turn wheel to centre and then left – swings radar back through target, jostle the antenna back and forth until an “eyeball” centre of target is obtained. This can be refined by adjusting the left-hand elevation wheel slightly.

The elevation wheel is “just a crank” which raises or lowers the antenna azimuth angle. Thus if doing an aerial sweep – aircraft target located, able to again centre the sweep on the target, then by using left hand elevation adjustments, and horizontal “left-centre stop-right” adjustments one can track an aircraft – but this really gets tricky. We used to do aircraft plots on these rigs while on “station-4YP” and we got pretty good at it. Talking of prop jobs – distance generally 80 nautical miles, but I did one at 95 nautical miles – just got a spot on him – quick bearing distance and that was all. Good long target, get several bearings, distance, etc. – could get a ground speed and track.

That’s brief description – hope makes some sense. Mayhaps you remember I met you when you were in Vancouver on the BOUNTY. Split a couple of drinks in your cabin.”

Well, we will not go into any great detail on that last sentence Barry, but we did manage a fair amount of public relations work for the movie Mutiny on the Bounty in that old cabin in BOUNTY. The most impressive visitor we had while in Vancouver was the late W. A. C. Bennett, at that time Premier of the province of British Columbia. Mr. Bennett came into the cabin and sat in my bunk while we shared a few yarns. Most enjoyable, but because he was a teetotalter we never got around to tapping the jug of joy juice I kept under the head of my bunk for that purpose.

Those who communicated with these River Class Frigates will remember them best by the call sign 4YP used while on station, which was nine hundred miles from Vancouver, as Barry mentions. They provided a radio beacon for navigation for both, ships and aircraft, the original weather observing duties, plus communications for ships and aircraft acting as a rescue vessel if necessary. Since two managed to carry out the duties without having to use the reserve ship it has to say something for the rugged construction of these Frigates.



Canadian Coast Guard

This is the CCGS STONE TOWN outboard of the CCGS ST. STEPHEN at their British Columbia Berth. You can see the result of the cannibalization of ST. STEPHEN in that her radar antenna is missing from the masthead.

I hope to learn the operation of the beacons on these vessels some day. They apparently keyed the location of the vessel in the identification of the beacon as to whether they were on station or within a certain position of the on station position. Just how they keyed these beacons to transmit this information would be most interesting.

These three Frigates were to be replaced by two new ships in 1967 that were specially built for the task. These two lasted until 1981 when the ocean station was terminated. All the ocean stations have been terminated.

VANCOUVER	CGBR
QUADRA	CGDN

I remember the three old Frigates on this station while in the Pacific in 1962. One of the Radio Officers had Amateur Station VE0MC on board which I contacted from my station VE0MO. But the incident I remember most from those weather stations was 4YM. The BOUNTY, the sailing ship I was in at the time, had call sign VYFM. The BOUNTY's Radio Station was the best station I sailed in. It was American, the RCA 5U Unit, and the fact it was in my cabin on the ship for lack of space. This way I could have the main receiver tuned in while off duty if I wanted. I could actually lie in my bunk while on watch and one evening, having finished for the day with nothing more than a few minutes of monitoring left for log entries on 500 kHz, I climbed into my bunk and read a magazine while doing same. When it came time to sign off for the day, I did this in the Log (Process Verbal, the old hand written variety mandatory in merchant ships of Canada and Britain for years). I tossed the log over on the operating desk and since all was quiet on 500

kHz left the receiver as was. I was using a head set because I was located among the cabins of the other officers, so just pushed this head set to the side of the bunk. Since the letter V is three dots and one dah and the figure 4 is four dots and one dah, they sound a lot alike. I awoke in the middle of the night trying to figure out who was calling me (VYFM) to learn someone near was calling 4YM. Needless to say I turned the receiver off after that.

The Department of Transport fleet was gradually increased and those that were acquired during this period, and are no longer part of the fleet, were:

C. D. HOWE	CGSS
AUK	CG2054
EIDER	CG2087
GANNET	CG2055
MARMOT	CG2147
MINK	CG2148
NANOOK	CG2056
PUFFIN	VC2924
RAVEN	VC2925
SKUA	CGGD



Canadian Coast Guard

C. D. HOWE call sign CGSS

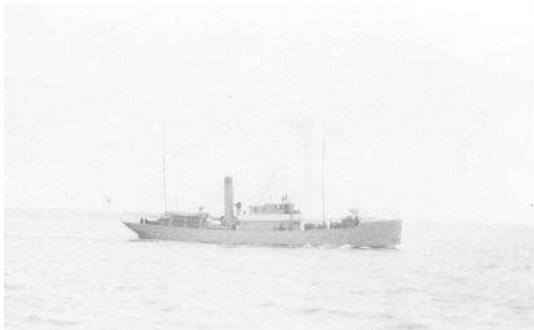
The C. D. HOWE was a northern supply ship built especially for the Department. The only photograph I found of her radio room did not reproduce well enough to publish. Her radio room was fitted with the Mackay unit that is described elsewhere on these pages. The C. D. HOWE was named for the long standing Minister of Transport, the one who took a special interest in the country's radio stations and took this section with him from one Department to another throughout his career as a Federal Government Minister.

The remaining vessels of the above list were former military landing craft of various types built during the war. As can be seen from the call signs issued to these vessels it is another classic example of the mess made in allotting our call signs. The NANOOK at one time carried a radio operator. She used the CG2056 call sign as a radiotelegraph call sign and used it on 500 kHz, and that must have been most frustrating. You could easily understand this if we were trying to assist the ITU by claiming only a certain portion of

the international call blocks, but we had sufficient blocks for years to ensure each of our vessels had a four letter call sign. The NANOOK was built in the United Kingdom in 1946 as a landing craft. She was converted in 1960 as an accommodation vessel and probably the reason for the radio operator and the radiotelegraph station. NARWHAL with call sign CGBP replaced NANOOK in 1963. Both vessels were to provide accommodation for northern crews in handling the annual freight runs to the high arctic. Both vessels made a few trips north only. I believe the NARWHAL made one only and then the government turned this service over to private enterprise and the service was handled by private companies. The two ships remained with the federal government under the Canadian Coast Guard. NANOOK was sold in 1965. These Landing Craft were good ships in which to sail. Captain Robert E. Doucette was master of SKUA for awhile. When these Landing Craft came back from the arctic it was customary for them to hitch a tow from one of the larger ships. He told me that one time they were towed back by the NARWHAL and hit some weather on the way back around the Hudson Strait. He said they were riding so well through this storm that they set up the movie projector and were watching movies, while the crew in NARWHAL were taking quite a beating to the point some of the seasoned seamen, including the Radio Officer were seasick.

There have been many ships over the years in the fleet now known as the Canadian Coast Guard fleet. Some of them were with the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Fisheries is now part of the Coast Guard fleet or the Coast Guard fleet is part of the Department of Fisheries. The choice is yours. Here are the ones that carried a Radio Officer and used to work in radiotelegraph. The year is the year they were built or entered service.

VDG	ABERDEEN (1894)	Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based at Saint John, New Brunswick.
CGCB	ACADIA (1913)	now located at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic at Halifax.
CGDQ	ALERT (1969)	a rescue vessel based at Dartmouth.
CGAH	ANN HARVEY (1987)	a buoy vessel based at St. John's, Newfoundland.
CGSP	ARANMORE (1914)	Lighthouse Supply vessel based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
VDM	ARCTIC (1904)	Arctic Supply Vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec.



Warren E. Hagar

This is CGS ARLEUX with call sign CGFX in 1926.

CGFX	ARLEUX (1919)	Fisheries Cruiser based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
CGFD	ARRAS (1919)	a sister of ARLEUX based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
CGBD	A. T. CAMERON (1958)	a Fisheries Research Vessel based at St. John's, Newfoundland.
CGCL	BAFFIN (1956)	a Research Vessel at the Bedford Institute at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

CGFB	BRANT (1928)	Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.
CGCW	CAMSELL (1959)	Icebreaker, Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based on the West Coast
VDC	CANADA (1904)	Fisheries Cruiser based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
VCBT	CAPE ROGER (1977)	a Fisheries Patrol Vessel based at St. John's, Newfoundland.
CGFP	CARTIER (1919)	Survey Vessel based at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
CGSS	C. D. HOWE (1950)	Northern Supply Vessel based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
CGSC	CHESTERFIELD (1928)	a Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGFR	CYGNUS (1945)	a Fisheries Patrol Vessel based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.
CGBV	DAWSON (1967)	a Research Vessel with the Bedford Institute at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.
CGDX	DES GROSEILLIERS (1982)	a Heavy Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGSM	D'IBERVILLE (1952)	Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec. The world's largest icebreaker when new



Warren E. Hagar

This is CGS DOLLARD with call sign CGSD in 1925.

CGSD	DOLLARD (1913)	Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel based at Saint John, New Brunswick.
CGSW	DRUID (1902)	Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel based on the Great Lakes.
VDI	EARL GREY (1909)	Icebreaker passenger steamer for Prince Edward Island Ferry Service until sold to Russia. Her final name was FEDOR LIDTKE with call sign UNYZ. Her wheelhouse and radio shack, are held in the Maritime Museum at Moscow.
CGSW	EDWARD CORNWALLIS (1949)	a Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

CGSZ	ERNEST LAPOINTE (1940)	Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGST	ESTEVAN (1912)	a Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based on the West Coast.
CGSP	FRANKLIN (1939)	a Lighthouse Supply vessel believed based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGBQ	G. B. REED (1962)	a Fisheries Research vessel based on the West Coast.
CGCX	GEORGE R. PEARKS (1986)	a Heavy Icebreaker based on the West Coast.
CGFB	GIVENCHY (1918)	a Fisheries Patrol vessel believed based on the West Coast.
CGHL	HENRY LARSEN (1986)	a Heavy Icebreaker based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.
CGDG	HUDSON (1963)	a Research vessel with the Bedford Institute at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia HUDSON was the first vessel to circumnavigate both the North and South American continents.
CGBT	J. E. BERNIER (1967)	Icebreaker, Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGBK	JOHN A. MACDONALD (1960)	a Heavy Icebreaker based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.
CGDJ	JOHN CABOT (1965)	the world's largest icebreaker cable repair ship for many years Based at St. John's, Newfoundland
CGCK	KAPUSKASING (1944)	a Research vessel with the Bedford Institute at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
CGGM	LABRADOR (1957)	a Heavy Icebreaker based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.



Anthony Congdon

CCGS LABRADOR in drydock 1978. Her radio shack can be seen just above the windows to her bridge. A pipe with a small can fastened to a line was used for passing messages between the bridge and the radio room.



Anthony Congdon

This is Radio Officer Rick Falvey VE1HA on duty in LABRADOR's radio room 1978

CGSY LADY GREY (1906) Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec.

CGSL LADY LAURIER (1902) a Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel based at Halifax, Nova Scotia.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the CGS LAURENTIAN with call sign CGSQ in 1926.

CGSQ LAURENTIAN (1917) a Lighthouse Supply and buoy vessel believed based at Quebec City, Quebec.

VGLS LORD STRATHCONA (1902) a Salvage Steamer based at Quebec City, Quebec.

CGBN LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT (1967) a Heavy Icebreaker based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and the first Canadian ship to reach the North Pole in August 1994.

CGFM MALASPINA (1920) a Fisheries Patrol vessel

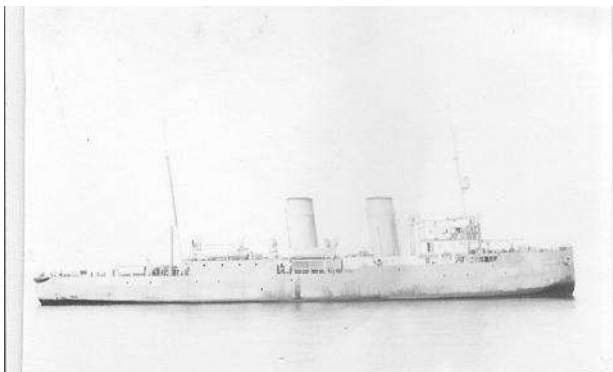
CGCC MARTHA L. BLACK (1985) a Heavy Icebreaker based on the West Coast.

CGBG MIKULA (1959) this was the last LURCHER LIGHTSHIP No. 4 with call sign VGA and is now a training vessel for the Coast Guard Engineering and Navigation Officer Cadet's at the Point Edward, Nova Scotia Coast Guard College.



Warren E. Hagar

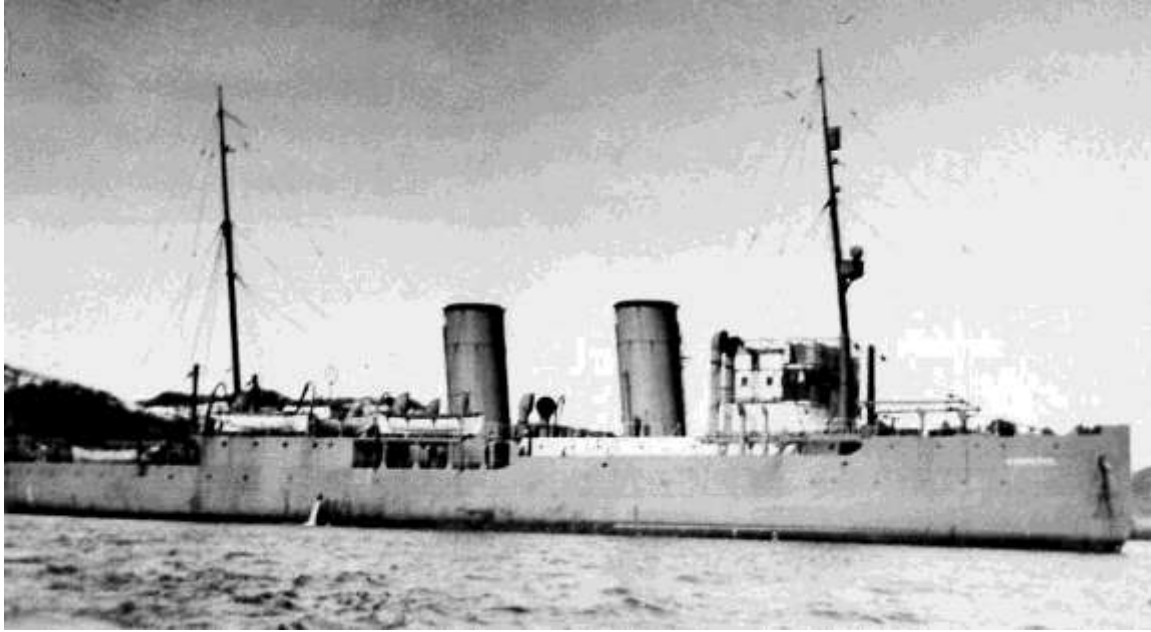
This is the Lurcher Lightship No. 14 in 1925 call sign VGA



Warren E. Hagar

This is CGS MIKULA with call sign CGSZ in 1927.

CGSZ MIKULA (1923) an Icebreaker built as the J. D. HAZEN and sold to Russia as the MIKULA SELEANINOVITCH and when she returned her name was shortened although still affectionately known as the "*MIKULA SON OF A BITCH*". Believed based at Quebec City, Quebec



H. H. MacLean

This is the first MİKULA that served as a St. Lawrence Icebreaker until 1937 with call sign CGSZ. Note the radio direction finder loop antenna fitted on the deckhead of the radio shack back towards MİKULA's stern.

CGSM MONTCALM (1904) an Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec.



Warren E. Hagar

This is CGS MONTCALM with call sign CGSM in the Hudson Strait in 1928.

CGBB MONTCALM (1957) an Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec.

VDK MONTMAGNY (1909) Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec.

CGSF MURRAY STEWART (1922) Marine Agency Tender based on the Great Lakes.

CGBP NARWHAL (1963) a Northern Supply Vessel based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

CGSN N. B. MCLEAN (1930) an Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec



Canadian Coast Guard

N. B. MCLEAN

CGFK	NEWINGTON (1908)	a Lighthouse Supply and Buoy vessel based on the West Coast.
CGBZ	NORMAN MCLEOD ROGERS (1969)	an Icebreaker, Supply and buoy vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGSB	PIERRE RADISSON (1978)	a Heavy Icebreaker based at Quebec City, Quebec.
VDM	QUADRA (1890)	Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel based on the West Coast.
CGDN	QUADRA (1967)	a Weather Ship based at Ocean Station "P".
CGGQ	ST. CATHERINES (1950)	a Weather Ship based at Ocean Station "P".
CGSV	ST. HELIERS (1930)	a Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel
CGGR	ST. STEPHEN (1950)	a Weather Ship based at Ocean Station "P".
CGSG	SAFEGUARDER (1929)	a Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel
CGFS	SAUREL (1929)	an Icebreaker based at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
VDS	SIMCOE (1909)	a Lighthouse Supply and Buoy Vessel based on the Great Lakes.
CGSJ	SIMON FRASER (1959)	a Light Icebreaker, Supply and buoy vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec, for most of her career. SIMON FRASER made a

circumnavigation around the North American continent for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 2000. She was decommissioned by the Coast Guard on March 31st, 2003, and sold by Ottawa for \$251,000.00. She and her twin sister TUPPER were alongside the provincial government wharf at Woodside, Nova Scotia, in January 2006. They both had been sold to Exploration Commercial Charter Yachts of Livorno, Italy, and were getting ready to sail over to Livorno to be converted into luxury yachts for adventure cruising. I have no knowledge of her having been renamed before going to Livorno.

CGGN	SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT (1959)	an Icebreaker based at St. John's, Newfoundland.
CGDT	SIR JOHN FRANKLIN (1978)	a Heavy Icebreaker based at St. John's, Newfoundland.
CGJK	SIR WILFRED LAURIER (1986)	Icebreaker, Supply and Buoy Vessel based at Quebec City, Quebec.
CGGF	SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER (1959)	Icebreaker, Supply and Buoy vessel based at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
CGGP	STONE TOWN (1950)	a Weather Ship based at Ocean Station "P".
CGBL	THOMAS CARLETON (1960)	Icebreaker, Supply and Buoy vessel based at Saint John, New Brunswick.
CGCV	TUPPER (1959)	a Light Icebreaker, Buoy vessel based at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island - TUPPER was decommissioned November 30 th , 1999, and was sold by Ottawa for \$199,969.00. She was renamed LI34ND until sold to Exploration Commercial Charter Yachts of Livorno, Italy. She and her twin sister SIMON FRASER were alongside the provincial government wharf at Woodside, Nova Scotia, getting ready to sail to Livorno for conversion to a luxury yacht for adventure cruising. She had already been renamed CARUSO.
CGBR	VANCOUVER (1967)	a Weather Ship based at Ocean Station "P".
CGCJ	WALTER E. FOSTER (1954)	a Lighthouse Supply Vessel based at Saint John, New Brunswick.
CGFQ	WM. J. STEWART (1932)	a Survey Vessel
CGCT	WOLFE (1959)	a Medium Icebreaker based at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.



M. S. "Mitch" Roscoe

This is the Canadian Coast Guard Ship EDWARD CORNWALLIS with international call sign CGJV on May 4th, 2003. At this time they have several classes of vessel or in other words they built several copies from a few different plans. One has to wonder why her helicopter hanger is extended and that is a good view of one extended if nothing else. She is in the approaches to Halifax Harbour so any helicopter activity would simply be touch and go. There is no reason for her to have one in the hanger. There is no radio room fitted in these vessels. No doubt all their communications is via Satellite Communications and VHF Radio.

February 2, 2008

This is the Ninth Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

THE RADIO SHACK

Naturally the first ships fitted with wireless were never designed to accommodate these units, so the first sets were housed in shacks along with the operators bunk in some convenient place on the ship. Often it was a wooden shack constructed on the boat deck. This remained the practice for some years, even after ships were designed to carry these operators. Possibly the noise factor involved with the operator carrying out his duties dictated this practice of isolating the operator and his equipment. It must have been a good system, at least one I would approve and then I could make all the noise I wanted without having to worry about disturbing the other crewmembers, especially those off watch and trying to sleep.

The Canadian government gets more years out of a ship than any other organization that I know. Many ships have lasted as long, but none to my knowledge were ever delivered as new vessels to one who became the final owner. Because of this, several of these Canadian government ships at least started their career with an actual Radio Shack. The heavy icebreaker N. B. MCLEAN is a very good example. She lasted for over fifty years and when built had her Radio Shack mounted on the upper deck back towards her stern. This was made more conspicuous from the direction finder loop antenna mounted on the roof. During a refit this shack was removed and a radio room was fitted in the main superstructure just behind the bridge. When we were told that the Canadian Coast Guard intended to open their ships to female crewmembers, we were told that the N. B. MCLEAN was to receive a refit costing seven million dollars for that purpose. Larger toilet seats were the only item any of us could think of, and at that price they must have been lined with mink fur. These old ships last forever because the government is an expert at spending four million in order to save two million dollars.

One of the last ships fitted with a Radio Shack was CCGS LABRADOR with call sign CGGM. Her last Radio Room was a steel shack on the top of the wheelhouse, a location that is better known by its proper term "Monkey Island". LABRADOR spent many years in the Canadian Government service and was a sister of the United States Coast Guard Wind Class Icebreakers that I described earlier with the naval vessels. LABRADOR's last Radio Room came about because of government shuffling rather than for any distinct reason. The shack happened to be there and was used for another purpose by the Navy. When the Department of Transport took over, the powers that be felt it the best location for the Radio Room. When the Navy had LABRADOR she not only had call sign CGVM, but many radio rooms throughout her superstructure, as did all warships. But from these exterior or first shacks we now have another well-known term, Radio Shack and one large electronics firm used this as their company name until changing it to Source here in Canada.

THE COLLECTIVE CALL SIGN

The collective call sign became popular back in the late 1920's. For example KRMC meant any ship radio station operated by RCA Communications Inc. This meant that any station that wanted to send a message to all ships fitted with RCA stations, listed this call sign on their traffic lists and then would broadcast the message at either scheduled times or right after their traffic list. It also meant that anyone who wanted to

contact one of these stations could do so simply by calling that call sign on a calling frequency. Canada assigned certain call signs for this purpose. The first Canadian Collective Call Signs appeared in the first International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Radio Stations in the early 1930's.

The Canadian Collective Call Signs:

- CGCG Any or all Canadian Coast Guard Ships
- CGMP Any or all Royal Canadian Mounted Police Ships
- CGNS Any or all Royal Canadian Navy Ships
- VCMS Any ship station operated by Canadian Marconi Company
- VCPR Any ship station of Canadian Pacific Railway
- VCQP Gulf of St. Lawrence Ice Patrol Vessel
(VCQP was the only Canadian Collective Call Sign listed during World War II)
- VCSS Any ship owned by Imperial Oil Limited
- VDDD Any Canadian Merchant Vessel
- VGGG All Canadian Merchant Vessels
- VXMC Any or all Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Craft

These Canadian collective call signs did not work very well because they made too much sense. The Navy used their CGNS call sign continuously. The Coast Guard CGCG call sign was a complete waste of time. I do not believe the CGMP call sign was ever used unless it was on their radio circuits. VCMS, VCPR, and VCSS may have been used just before and just after World War II. The VXMC collective call sign did not appear in the International Telecommunication Union Publications. The Air Force Marine Craft were in the International Telecommunication Union Publications for a short time after World War II only. The VXMC collective call sign may have been used on their radio circuits. I had no knowledge of the VXMC call sign until after I retired and found it listed in a 1946 listing. I heard several foreign ships call the VCQP call sign when they wanted ice information but each time one of the Canadian Coast Stations provided the service. I did not hear a ship use this VCQP call sign as though it were assigned this call sign.

The big advantage of these collective call signs was in contacting a ship within one of these fleets. For example if you wanted to contact a Mounted Police vessel for any reason all you had to do was call CGMP on 500 kHz. One of their ships should have answered you and either handled your communications or put you in contact with the proper ship or radio station. The British had a number of these collective call signs and like so many other nations used them regularly. The last time I heard the VDDD call a German ship sent it on 500 kHz. At the time I was in a British ship but since it was more Canadian than British decided to answer if another ship did not. Dave Vail, Radio Officer in the ferry BLUENOSE with call sign VDND heard him and answered; a Canadian operator sailing in a German ship who wanted a little chat with someone from home.

THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE FLEET

VXMC = ANY OR ALL ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE MARINE CRAFT

The VXMC Collective Call Sign was listed in 1946 and it did not appear in the International Telecommunication Union Publications. I do not know if any use was made of this call sign.

The Royal Canadian Air Force had a navy that started operations in 1935 as the Marine Section and then Marine Squadrons. Some of their vessels entered service in 1928 so I feel confident they had boats of various descriptions when the Royal Canadian Air Force was created in 1924. This was a fleet to assist in the operation of their flying boats, to act as a fast search and rescue service for downed aircraft and a fleet of supply vessels to service their various bases around the coasts. The air force treated their vessels a lot like they treated their aircraft. Their aircraft had registrations they used for identification and the various crews often gave their aircraft a distinctive name that was treated more or less as graffiti. All air force marine craft were given a pendant number that commenced with the letter M and the biggest percentage were small dories, scows, barges, workboats, canoes and similar small vessels. The numbers that have been found go from M-1 to M-1011 inclusive.

The larger RCAF craft, the ones fitted with an engine, often carried three crewmembers, one a skipper, one an engineer and the other a radio operator. This was often the crew in one of their aircraft so the marine craft were treated the same. There were a few large supply vessels and several of these made some interesting voyages. There were several high-speed motor launches called Crash Boats and some of these were capable of over forty knots in speed.

Nearly everything transmitted in radiotelegraph during World War II was done in a coded form. One favourite system used during this war by the various military organizations to ensure radio silence by the mobile stations was the use of two coast or ground stations. One station would call another and pass a message. On receipt of this message the station receiving would retransmit it back to the transmitting station. This would not only ensure accuracy on the receiving station's part but would give any station monitoring this traffic, two chances of obtaining a solid copy. This was the practice with the marine vessels and aircraft of the Royal Canadian Air Force. They had two stations on the East Coast, one at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and the other at Botwood, Newfoundland. Dartmouth used call sign 7AW and Botwood H7H, at least during a portion of the war. All their ships and aircraft used a frequency of 6666 kilohertz during the day and 3333 kilohertz at night. Their operators managed to work Bella Bella, British Columbia on 6666 kilohertz from Botwood on occasion.

These Coast or Land Station Radio Operators monitored three frequencies continuously, one frequency in the left earpiece and another in the right of their headset, and the third on speaker. They could switch these frequencies around so that they had one frequency only in their headset. I have been unable to identify the third frequency. Some of the land station operators were WD's. A WD was a girl from the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Geoff D. Pilborough wrote two histories of the RCAF Marine Squadrons, volume one and volume two. Volume one is ISBN 1 898875 11 1 and volume two is ISBN 1 898875 17 0. I will refer to these two publications throughout this exercise as volume one or volume two. Anyone with any interest in this fleet would enjoy these two books. The other book I mention is "Canadian Warship Names" by David J. Freeman ISBN 1-55125-048-9 and this book is most interesting. I have spent many hours lost in the pages of all three books.

LCdr B. H. Taylor has done a lot of research on this fleet and has been very helpful in sharing this research with me. He has actually gone over my early effort with this fleet that was mainly what I had copied from Mr. Pilborough, LCdr Freeman, what I found within the International Telecommunication Union Publications, the Janap Lists and an old navy list of call signs.

On page 18 of volume one Mr. Pilborough states that a decision was made to install RCAF radio stations at Cartwright, Northwest River, Hopedale and Hebron in Labrador and Canada Bay, Newfoundland in 1941. The material, supplies and crews to construct these stations was delivered with RCAF M.302 ARISTOCRAT, RCAF M.361 OK SERVICE V and the CGS MONTCALM with international call sign CGSM. The crews in these ships helped construct these stations and the ships were used to house the construction crews while building these stations. When the building was completed a small number of WOG's (Wireless Operator-Ground) were left to operate the stations. In October 1941 the RCAF M.361 OK SERVICE V went back to these stations and brought the operators out to Goose Bay and Halifax for the winter. I have no further information on these stations but they sound like they would be mainly for the RCAF Marine Squadron vessels.

The same radio station fitted in the Catalina aircraft was also fitted in some of these vessels. The Catalina aircraft was the same PBV aircraft as the Canso except it had no wheels and was therefore restricted to the water, a true flying boat. This radio station was a separate receiver and transmitter built by Northern Electric. The receiver was a general coverage version known as an AR1. The transmitter was two channel or frequencies only, 3333 kilohertz and 6666 kilohertz, known as an AT1. The AT3 two channel transmitter and the AR88 general coverage receiver were old friends from the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) back in the 1950's. There must be some connection since they have the same AT and AR prefix. Some of the air force vessels at least some of the crash boats had Collins radio equipment. The radio equipment

manufactured by Art Collins' company in the United States was considered the very best available. A photograph can be seen of one of these stations between pages 42 and 43 in volume two. The air force did not train their Marine Squadron radio operators. They were graduates of the various civilian radio schools around Canada and had to pass the code at 12 words per minute. The air force paid for this course on completion.

The RCAF had some seamanship and engineer training at their base in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia but their crews held the regular government certificates of proficiency from the civilian schools around Canada for their larger vessels. Some of their engineers actually had courses with some of the companies that manufactured some of the engines in their vessels. Some of the gasoline engines in use in these vessels were the same engines used in some of the aircraft in service at the time. I know one engineer who actually served with the vessels for awhile and then with one of the aircraft fighter squadrons. The RCAF base in Dartmouth ran some boat building courses and they did major maintenance on all their small vessels including the high speed crash boats at that location.

There was an RCAF Manual for Seaman but none of the crewmembers that I know knew this. This was 'Manual for Seamen' H.Q. 570 – 43H 100 – JAN – 44. It is a most interesting document and has a photograph of the various Marine Craft.

I found the naming of the RCAF Marine Craft interesting. According to a memorandum dated September 17th, 1940 The Honourable Minister for Air gave permission for Marine Craft to be named in addition to numbering. The 36 foot to 50 foot boats were to be named after birds. Looking up the description of each bird these vessels are named for is a complete education in itself. I did not realize there were so many ducks, sandpipers, and so on. These water birds were a most appropriate name for these vessels although there had to be some confusion with various aircraft that were named for water birds at the same time. The 50 foot to 70 foot boats were to be named for Canadian lakes such as Lake Huron, Lake Erie and so on. The boats 70 foot and up were to be named for Indian tribes such as Mohawk, Micmac and so on. Another memorandum dated September 19th, 1940 suggested names for water birds, lakes and Indian tribes and it was suggested that the word Lake was to be dropped from the name. Simply making it Huron rather than Lake Huron and so on. RCAF HURON was named for the first nation Indian tribe and not the lake of the same name.

The air force marine craft call signs I managed to find were all right after World War II and they all had a VX prefix. I also found some radiotelephone call codes for these marine craft in an old Joint Army Navy Air Force Publication better known by the acronym Janap.

The Janap Lists, the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations and the old navy list I found, list these RCAF Marine Craft by name and do not have their "M" pendant number. LCdr Taylor states the official name for an RCAF Marine Craft was "M" then the number followed by the name such as M.157 HERON. He stated the "M" number and the name were always quoted in official correspondence and the few vessels that were registered with the Department of Transport were named this way and he suggested I do the same with this list.

This is simply another example of the reason I became interested in this history in the first place. I will never understand why we had so much confusion with such things. If the official name was M.396 KINGFISHER it should have been listed this way in the Janap Lists, the International Telecommunication Union Lists and that old navy list. KINGFISHER was the reason I became interested in this RCAF Marine Craft fleet. I was trying to find HMCS KINGFISHER and I kept finding a Canadian Warship KINGFISHER listed with, to me at the time, an odd ball VXCP call sign. I had been in the habit of communicating with Canadian fishing and merchant vessels using a four letter call sign with the VX prefix.

A warship is listed in the International Telecommunication Union publications by name followed by crossed swords indicating a warship. There is very little detail except the nationality of the vessel and call sign with these warship entries. Whereas a merchant ship is listed with the full radio detail including frequencies, the radio authority operating the station such as Marconi, and if the ship is fitted with radar and radio direction finding equipment. Even the charges for sending a message to the ship are included.

Various vessels will be listed with one or two letters to indicate a Government Vessel, Icebreaker, Fishing Vessel, Tug and so on. Therefore, KINGFISHER is listed in the International Telecommunication Union Lists with the letters CAN to indicate Canada, the VXCP call sign and the crossed swords only. VX is a Canadian call sign prefix and therefore indicates the country in which that vessel is registered also.

I found RCAF KINGFISHER and HMCS KINGFISHER listed in the same issue of the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations, along with all the other vessels around the world with the KINGFISHER name. The difference between the two Canadian listings was simply the call sign only. HMCS KINGFISHER was assigned the CGKK call sign. This was the 1959 List of Ship Stations and the last time the Canadian military ships were listed in this publication. I purchased a lot of the records from the International Telecommunication Union in micro fiche diazo form, but I cannot figure out how to transfer these to this document via my scanner.

Kin		— 289 —	
MYCR	Kingennie ⁽²⁾ Ca CP HX	GSVU	Kingsnorth Fisher ⁽²⁾ Ca CP HX
20 { 8)	G tv	20 { 5)	G x tv
HPTF	King Fish Ca CP H8	WDYU	Kings Point [1] ⁽²⁾ Ca CP H8
40 185)	PNR tu	40 { 4)	USA xyz
MAOP	Kingfisher/MAOP ⁽²⁾ CP -	GFZE	Kings Reach ⁽²⁾ Ca CP H8
-	G -	40 { 8)	G xz v
VCJV	Kingfisher/VCJV Ca CV H24	LAWR	Kings Star ⁽²⁾ Ca CR HX
40 3)	CAN tu	40 1)	NOR t
WR2643	Kingfisher/WR2643 CP HX	GVTW	Kingston ⁽²⁾ Ca CP H8
⑥ *	USA tu	20 { 10)	G x tv
	* Bing Crosby Enterprises, 9028 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles (Cal).	GGPW	Kingston Almandine ⁽²⁾ Ca CP
ZEOH	Kingford Ca CP H8	20 { 5) 22)	G xyz t [HX
40 11)	HKG xz t	③)	
GWTW	King George ⁽²⁾ Ca CP H8	GHJR	Kingston Amber ⁽²⁾ Ca CP HX
40 { 8)	G xz v	20 1 -	

This is a portion of the top of page 289 of the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations 7th edition – December 1966. Unfortunately this is the only copy I have that I can scan and use here. As you can see there are 3 KINGFISHER's and because there are more than one each is shown with the oblique stroke and their call sign. MAOP is the call sign of the top listing and the G indicates it is in the United Kingdom. In other words it is HMS KINGFISHER. The crossed swords indicate it is a warship and the CP indicates that this ship's radio station is open to public correspondence. The Canadian military ships did not have the CP or any other designation and the only other detail they displayed was code 2) stating their accounts were handled by the Telecommunications Branch of the Department of Transport in Ottawa, Ontario.

The second KINGFISHER on the list is a Canadian vessel that belonged to Nipigon Lake Timber Company Limited at Port Arthur, Ontario. Fort William and Port Arthur were combined years ago and became the city of Thunder Bay. The call sign of this KINGFISHER is VCJV, the Ca states it is a Cargo Ship, the CV states that the Radio Station is open exclusively to correspondence of a private agency and the H24 states the Radio Station is open 24 hours or continuous while the ship is at sea. The 40 is the basic ship station charge per word in centimes of gold-francs for a radiotelegram. The 3) states that the ship's radio station accounts are handled by the Canadian Marconi Company in Montreal. The tu states the radio frequencies in use by the radio station per the chart located at the bottom of page 289 and reproduced below.

nearly disappeared from mass sterilization during the first part of the twentieth century. I have the name as spelled in the official lists of these vessels and the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations. The ITU List of Ship Stations is the one we were taught to use when in doubt about the spelling of a ships name. The Supplement to the National Geographic Magazine for May 2007 spells this tribe *Abenaki* and I believe some first nation people helped produce this supplement. World Book Encyclopedia spells this tribe as Abnaki. The U.S. Navy had the Abnaki Class of Tug. A friend of mine was a radioman in one, the USS PAIUTE with call sign NZNG. Therefore, this must be another way to spell the name of this tribe.

The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons both Volume One and Volume Two by Geoff D. Pilborough have a lot of errors and the most frustrating one is RCAF ABNAKI and RCAF NOOTKA. They are mixed-up many times including the front cover of Volume One. It is very hard to keep them straight.

An excellent photo of RCAF ABNAKI is found on the front cover of volume one although it is labeled RCAF NOOTKA. Another photo can be seen between pages 82 and 83 volume two and another between pages 98 and 99.

The six 1941 high speed rescue launches, pendant numbers, international call sign, name and radiotelephone call were as follow:

M233	B109	VXCB	RCAF ABNAKI	"Flashlight G"
M235	B162 and B111	VXCN	RCAF HURON	"Trium G"
M231	B159 and B107	VXCR	RCAF MALECITE	"Extort F"
M234	B161 and B110	VXCS	RCAF MONTAGNAIS	"Event E"
M208	B105	VXCT	RCAF NOOTKA	"Giddy U"
M232	B160 and B108	VXDG	RCAF TAKULI	"Trium H"

All six high-speed launches were transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy in 1951. Their RCAF names were dropped and everything was changed except for the three digits of the "M" numbers. The RCAF number in their pendant was used by the RCN as their name. The six were with pendant number, international call sign, name and radiotelephone call:

208	CYWZ	HMC HSL208	"Calamity N"
231	CGJX	HMC HSL231	
232	CYWB	HMC HSL232	"Chapel Y"
233	CYWX	HMC HSL233	"Ellsworth G"
234	CGWD	HMC HSL234	
235	CZGN	HMC HSL235	

HMC HSL broke down to His Majesty's Canadian High Speed Launch. I was unable to locate three of the radiotelephone calls as can be seen. These six vessels served six years and were turned over to Crown Assets Disposal Corporation in 1958.

RCAF ABNAKI was based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. From 1952 until 1958 this one was HMC HSL 233 with call sign CYWX and was based at HMCS SHEARWATER, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. I found no record of her after 1958. One of these vessels apparently burned while with the Navy and one was used as living accommodation in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. This one could have been one or the other.

RCAF ADVENTURER

M.3

1942

26-foot Range Boat (Type III) at RCAF Station Trenton

RCAF ALBATROSS

M.440
1942
40-foot Refueling Launch built in 1942

RCAF ALBATROSS
Radiotelephone "Chapel A"
M.848

1953 – 1962
40-foot steel High Speed Rescue built in 1952
This vessel was renamed RCAF HERON because it would have been a nightmare trying to keep it separate from the 10 Grumman Albatross aircraft then members of Search and Rescue. It is reported that she called Comox Tower for a radio check and received clearance to land.

RCAF ALLIGATOR
M.703
Served until 1948
Tracked Landing Craft
Reclassified as a Landing Vehicle Track October 27th, 1948

RCAF ALOMA/CORMACK
M.580 and B134
1943
58-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1932
Based at Eastern Air Command, Newfoundland

RCAF AMARYLLIS
M.9
1941
105 foot Wooden Supply Vessel (Type II)
Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia

RCAF AMORITA
M.449
40-foot Range Boat and Rescue Boat
Listed in Canadian Warship Names and renamed RCAF JAGER according to the Comparison Table.

RCAF ANJOANNE
M.279
Built in 1937
This vessel was wood but the type is unknown

RCAF ARISTOCRAT
M.302 and B113
1940 – 1944
A wooden 98-foot Supply Vessel (Type I) built in 1932 and former Rum-runner with a Buchanan engine Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and a photo can be seen between pages 130 and 131 in volume two. RCAF ARISTOCRAT arrived from the northern stations on September 11th, 1943, and departed Dartmouth for sea in gale warnings on October 10th, 1943. She arrived at Liverpool, Nova Scotia, on October 19th, 1943. She towed RCAF BEAVER to Mill Cove, Nova Scotia, on January 18th, 1944, and she towed RCAF ELAINE W to Mill Cove, Nova Scotia, on January 23rd, 1944. According to Canadian Warship Names this vessel was HMCS ARISTOCRAT an auxiliary vessel from April 1944 until July 1946. This vessel transferred to the navy on February 12th, 1944.

RCAF ARRESTEUR
She probably retained her CGSJ call sign
M.305 and B114

1939 – 1946

High Speed Rescue

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and a photo can be seen on page 83 of volume two. The former RCMP ARRESTEUR call sign CGSJ and the air force listed her as High Speed Rescue but one has to wonder what they mean by high speed.

RCAF ARROW

M.537 and B179

1944

60-foot Supply Vessel (Type III)

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF ASTRA

M.160

26-foot Sailing Sloop

RCAF A. T. and B. No. 17

M.486

1942 – 1944

84-foot wooden Large Scow built in 1939

RCAF ATLIN

M.12 and B165

1942 - 1946

65-foot length overall Range Boat (Type I)

Based at Western Air Command, Sea Island Patricia Bay, British Columbia

RCAF AUKLET

M.446

1942

40-foot Refueling Launch built in 1942

RCAF AVOCET

Radiotelephone “Charity X”

M.793

1950 – 1965

25-foot steel Aircraft Crash Boat built in 1950

RCAF BABINE

M.534 and B177

1943 - 1946

60-foot Supply Vessel (Type III) built in 1943

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF BALDPATE

M.609

1944 – 1946

38-foot wooden Crash Boat built in 1944

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

This vessel was built by Falconer Marine Industries Limited.

RCAF BANOSKIK

M.408 and B118

Served until 1945

81-foot High Speed Rescue

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and a photo can be seen in appendices one at the

back of volume one. A former USN PT7 built by the Philadelphia Navy Yard. It had four Hall-Scott Engines in tandem coupled to two shafts.

RCAF B. C. STAR

M.427

1942 – 1943

72-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1940

This was a Western Air Command Supply Vessel and was lost with all hands. The cause of the loss is unknown off Cape St. James, British Columbia on July 24th, 1943.

RCAF BEAVER

M.522 and B137

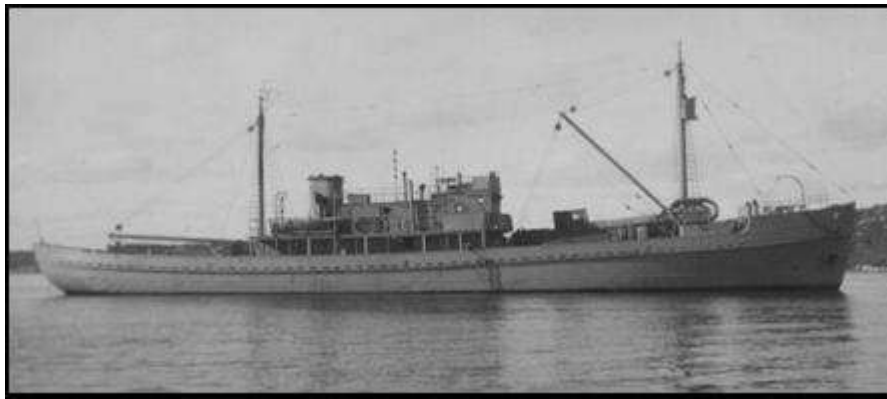
1942 – 1946

170-foot Supply Vessel (Type I) built in 1942

Based at Eastern Air Command

Built by Smith and Rhuland, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

Departed Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on January 21st, 1944, and arrived back at Dartmouth on March 6th, 1944, completely covered in ice from a very interesting voyage to Iceland. This vessel grounded on August 20th, 1946, off Cape James at the entrance to James Bay and became a total loss. There was no loss of life. A photo of this vessel under construction can be seen between pages 22 and 23 of volume one. Another photo can be seen between pages 130 and 131 of volume two.



Royal Canadian Air Force

RCAF M.522 BEAVER

RCAF BINGBALL

M.283

1940

18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF BITTERN

M.196

1940

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF BLACK DUCK

M.872

Served until 1965

40-foot High Speed Rescue

This is a steel forty-foot High Speed Rescue Boat that served from the 1950's to 1965 and is now restored at the Maritime Museum, Vancouver, British Columbia. This vessel was taken over by the Navy on April

1st, 1965 according to Canadian Warship Names, and was turned over to the museum in 1985. Photographs of this vessel can be seen on page 17 of volume two.

RCAF BLACK GOOSE

VXCD

Radiotelephone "Disband B".

M.610

1944

40-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1944

Based at Eastern Air Command, Mont Joli, Quebec

Transferred to the RCN 1954

RCAF BLUE BILL

M.1

Built for the RCAF in 1941

1942

38-foot overall Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia

This vessel was allocated to No. 32 O.T.U. RAF Patricia Bay but controlled by the RCAF.

RCAF BLUE GOOSE

VXCF

Radiotelephone "Catapult D"

M.611

1944 – 1952

40-foot Range Boat (Type II) built in 1944

Transferred to the RCN on January 21st, 1952

RCAF BOUNTY

M.378

1941 – 1943

38-foot Range Boat (Type III) built in 1931

Based at Eastern Air Command and was on loan from Mr. Molson, Montreal, Quebec, and was wrecked in Halifax Harbour on July 27th, 1943.

RCAF BRANT

VXCG

Radiotelephone "Event F"

M.267

1942 – 1953

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Bella Bella, Prince Rupert, British Columbia

RCAF BRAS D'OR

M.413 and B119

58-foot High Speed Rescue vessel that served until 1946

Two photos can be seen between pages 98 and 99 of volume two. Based at Eastern Air Command and was a former 58 foot USN PT3. The former HMC HSL262 with pendant Number V262 and a photo can be seen between pages 130 and 131 in volume two.

RCAF BUTTERBALL

M.384

1942

40-foot Refueling Launch

RCAF CANADA GOOSE

VXCJ

Radiotelephone "Menu M"

M.614

1944

36-foot Range Boat (Type II) built in 1944

RCAF CAPE CANSO

M.426

1942 – 1944

73-foot Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1941

Based at Western Air Command

RCAF CAREY

M.296 and B126

40-foot Range Boat (Type VI)

RCAF CHILKO

M.10

1942 - 1946

65-foot length overall Range Boat (Type I)

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

RCAF COMBAT

M.350

1941

54-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1940

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

A Supply and Salvage Vessel that joined the RCAF fleet on August 23rd, 1941. This vessel had been a patrol craft as HMCS COMBAT and believed to have joined the naval fleet sometime in 1940, according to Canadian Warship Names. A photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF COOT

M.495

1942

35-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1940

Based at Western Air Command, Prince Rupert, British Columbia

The former RCAF VIKI K.

RCAF CORMORANT

M.197

1940

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

A Seaplane Tender with two Buchanan eight engines.

RCAF CRANE

M.443

1942

40-foot Refueling Launch built in 1942

RCAF CURLEW

M.428

1942 – 1947

40-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1925

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

RCAF CYGNET II

M.303

This vessel was a wooden vessel built in 1935 of 43-feet

RCAF DABCHICK

Radiotelephone "Extort G"

M.364 and B127

1942

37-foot Aircraft Crash Boat built in 1941

Based at Eastern Air Command, North Sydney, Nova Scotia

Several records of these vessels list this one as BABCHICK and now I know what a Dabchick is.

RCAF DEERLEAP

M.592 and B154

71-foot wooden vessel built in 1929

Unknown according to the various lists of these vessels

Based at Western Air Command

RCAF DETECTOR

She probably retained her CGPZ call sign

M.306 and B115

1939 – 1946

High Speed Rescue

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

The former RCMP DETECTOR call sign CGPZ

She is listed as High Speed Rescue but one has to wonder what they mean by high speed.

A photo can be seen between pages 146 and 147 in volume two.



Kenn Haycock

RCAF DETECTOR

RCAF DORIS III

M.347

45-foot wooden vessel built in 1939

RCAF DUCK

VXCK

Radiotelephone "Jingle P"

M.178

1938 – 1959

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Fitted with two Kermath engines

Based at Eastern Air Command, Trenton, Ontario

RCAF EGRET

M.494

Range Boat (Type II)

RCAF EGRET

M.925

Served until 1965

40-foot High Speed Rescue

This vessel was taken over by the Navy on April 1st, 1965 and served until 1984.

RCAF EIDER

VXCL

Radiotelephone "Jigger N"

M.202 and B103

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Built for the RCAF by Gidley Boat Co Penetanguishene, Ontario in 1940

A photo can be seen between pages 146 and 147 in volume two.

RCAF ELAINE W

M.300 and B112

1941 – 1946

79-foot Supply Vessel (Type II)

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

A photo can be seen between pages 98 and 99 in volume two.

RCAF EMPRESS

M.96 renumbered was M.1 in 1928

1928

Unknown

RCAF ESKIMO

M.456 and B125

1943 – 1947

155-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type I) built in 1942

Based at Eastern Air Command

Departed Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on January 12th, 1944, and arrived back at Dartmouth on March 17th, 1944, after a brief stop at St. John's, Newfoundland, for repairs, from a very rough voyage to Iceland and back. This vessel was the former RCAF M.456 LAWRENCE K. SWEENEY. A photo of the ice accumulated on this vessel during the above trip is found between pages 22 and 23 in volume one.

RCAF ESKIMO II

"M" Number unknown

Unknown according to the lists of these vessels but it is listed in Canadian Warship Names.

RCAF EVA CLARE

M.298

General Utility Boat that served until 1943 that had been built in 1931

According to Canadian Warship Names a vessel with the name Eva Clare became a guard ship at Toronto as HMCS EVA CLARE from August 14th, 1943 until January 1st, 1944 and had been the former RCAF M.298.

RCAF EVERGREEN I

M.432

Range Boat

Listed in Canadian Warship Names and renamed RCAF PLOVER.

RCAF FLAMINGO

M.502

1942 – 1946

32-foot wooden General Utility Boat with engines rather than an engine built in 1937

Based at Eastern Air Command, North Sydney, Nova Scotia

RCAF FLAMINGO

Radiotelephone "Disband A".

M.847

1953 – 1965

40-foot steel High Speed Rescue

Taken over by the Navy on April 1st, 1965

RCAF FLAMINGO was based at CFB Comox with RCAF HERON and one other forty-footer. A photograph of this can be seen on page 19 of volume two.

RCAF FREDERICK H II

M.307

1940

92-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) and a former Rum Runner built in 1929

Based at Eastern Air Command

This vessel blew up and sank on August 15th, 1940 off Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, while taking a load of aviation gasoline in barrels from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, to St. John's, Newfoundland. An American swordfish vessel rescued the crew. There was no loss of life or serious injuries.

RCAF FULMAR

M.291

1942

40-foot Range Boat (Type III)

Based at Western Air Command, Prince Rupert, British Columbia

RCAF FUSLIER

M.579

1943 – 1945

40-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1929

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

RCAF GADWALL

M.199

1940

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Alliford Bay, British Columbia

This vessel was a seaplane tender and crash boat.

RCAF GANDER

M.444 and B132

Self-propelled 40-foot Refueling Launch

RCAF GANNET

M.521 and B124

1941

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

This vessel was ex Imperial Airways 38-foot tender No. 1060

RCAF GANNET

M.873

Served until 1965

40-foot High Speed Rescue

This one was based at Cold Lake, Alberta and much fishing was enjoyed from her I am sure. She wound up in a used boat yard in Edmonton and a photo of this can be seen on page 18 in volume two.

RCAF GARGANEY

M.204 and B122

1942

40-foot Range Boat (Type III) (Armoured Target Boat)

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF GENERAL MACKENZIE

M.639

1943

High Speed Rescue

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

This one sounds more army than air force and more cargo vessel than high speed rescue but it is all we have found so far.

RCAF GILLEY NO.21

M.650

1942 – 1944

92-foot General Purpose Scow built in 1922

RCAF GLENFRUIN

M.297

1940 – 1942

39-foot wooden General Utility Boat

This vessel was chartered by the RCAF 1940 – 1942 for use as a safety boat on bombing ranges.

This vessel was chartered by the RCN 1944 – 1945 for use at a Sea Cadet Camp at Rotary Island, Gananoque ON.

RCAF GODWIT

M.445

1942

40-foot Refueling Launch built in 1942

RCAF G OF G 8

M.640

1942 – 1944

92-foot wooden Large Scow built in 1920

Listed in Canadian Warship Names

RCAF GOOSE

M.448

1942 – 1945

36-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1932

This was the former cabin cruiser PANDA and was chartered by the RCAF

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

RCAF G.P.R. No. 1

“M” Number unknown

1942

90-foot wooden General Purpose Scow built in 1923

RCAF GREBE

M.198

1940

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Coal Harbour, British Columbia

RCAF GRAY GOOSE

VXCM

Radiotelephone “Fido H”

M.612

1944 – 1952

40-foot Range Boat (Type II) built in 1944

RCAF GUILLEMOT

Radiotelephone "Disband B"

M.849

1953 – 1965

40-foot steel High Speed Rescue

Taken over by the Navy on April 1st, 1965 and served until 1984

RCAF GULL

M.429

1942 – 1946

36-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1940 at Stevenson, BC.

This vessel was based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, BC.

This was a General Utility Boat and had been a fishing vessel belonging to Japanese Canadians. As RCAF GULL she carried a total crew of skipper, engineer and wireless operator. That description is in the history of these vessels by Geoff D. Pilborough.

RCAF HAIDA

M.206

1941 – 1946

82-foot Supply Vessel (Type II) built for the RCAF by Star Shipyards (Mercer's) Limited in 1941.

This vessel was based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia and joined the RCAF fleet in 1944 according to Canadian Warship Names. A photo can be seen between pages 162 and 163 in volume two.

RCAF HALDO

M.346

1941 – 1946

30-foot Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF HARLEQUIN

M.617

30-foot Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF HERON

M.157

1937 – 1946

A 38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Ucluelet, British Columbia

A Crash Boat and Seaplane Tender built by the British Power Boat Company, United Kingdom.

A photograph is found between pages 22 and 23 of volume one.

RCAF HERON

This vessel probably retained the "Chapel A" radiotelephone call

M.848

1962 – 1965

40-foot steel High Speed Rescue built in 1952

This one started out as RCAF ALBATROSS but from confusion with the 10 Grumman Albatross aircraft then in service had to be renamed. This one was taken over by the Navy on April 1st, 1965. From the photographs I have seen of these vessels it appears as though they had their pendant number and an RCAF Roundel painted on each bow with the name painted across the stern. This one appears to have been at CFB Comox with RCAF FLAMINGO and one other at one time. This photograph can be seen on page 19 of volume two.

RCAF HESQUIAT

M.596 and B182

1944

104-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1944

This vessel was a sister to M.597 KIMSQUIT and was based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia.

RCAF HILI-KUM

M.582

1943

46-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type III) built in 1939

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF HURON

VXCN

Radiotelephone "Trium G"

M.235 – B111 and B162

1941 to 1953

70-foot High Speed Rescue

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia and a photo can be seen on page 38 of volume two. A sister of RCAF ABNAKI and became HMC HSL 235 with call sign CZGN from 1952 until 1958. In 1959 this one became the yacht MARBORENE and later the yacht SEAWARD a photo can be seen on page 170 of volume two.

RCAF IBIS

M.399 and B129

1943

40-foot General Utility Boat built in 1942

Based at Eastern Air Command at Yarmouth and LaHave, Nova Scotia

A safety range boat with a diesel engine and was a copy of a Cape Island Boat and a sister to RCAF ROVEN M-400. Her Skipper was Sgt. John Cunningham, Cape Forchu, Nova Scotia.

RCAF JAGER

M.449

1942

36-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1941

The former RCAF M.449 AMORITA

Based at Western Air Command, Boundary Bay Bella Bella, British Columbia

RCAF KAGOME

M.295

This vessel was a General Utility Boat that served until 1943

RCAF KADIAC

M.654

1944 – 1945

65-foot wooden Schooner built in 1938

Based at Eastern Air Command

A white sailing yacht with accommodation for about ten people fitted with a three-cylinder diesel engine.

This vessel went aground on the Magdalene Islands, Quebec, on June 19th, 1944 and was towed back to Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, by RCAF ELAINE W arriving on June 27th, 1944.

RCAF KIMSQUIT

M.597

1944

114-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1944 and a sister of M.596 HESQUIAT

RCAF KINGFISHER

VXCP

Radiotelephone "Disband A"

M.396

1942

40-foot General Utility and Diving Boat fitted for Range Duties/Towing Winch built in 1942

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF KITTIWAKE

M.290

1942 – 1946

40-foot Range Boat (Type III)

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

A forty-foot Bombing Range and Target Towing Vessel with three Chrysler Crown engines and a photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF KNOT

Radiotelephone "Equal S"

M.810

1953 – 1965

25-foot steel Aircraft Crash Boat

A Knot is a red-breasted Sandpiper that breeds in the Arctic.

RCAF LAPWING

M.615

1944 – 1946

30-foot Range Boat (Type III) built in 1942

RCAF LAWRENCE K. SWEENEY

M.456 and B125

Based at Eastern Air Command

A Supply Vessel

The Sweeney family of Western Nova Scotia had a sizeable fleet and made a lot of money rum running.

This vessel was built in 1942 and was renamed RCAF M.456 ESKIMO before it had a chance to do any rum running. Corporal Lawrence Sweeney was engineer in RCAF M.400 ROVEN.

RCAF LE GAULOIS

M.529

1942 – 1944

Unknown 47-foot wooden vessel built in 1933

RCAF LOON

M.265

1942

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Alliford Bay, British Columbia

RCAF LUCKY PEGGY

M.153

38-foot General Utility Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

This was a Cape Island Boat and a former rumrunner that was capable of ten knots in speed. It is believed to have been one of the first air force marine craft when this service was first formed in 1935 and a photo of this vessel can be seen between pages 22 and 23 of volume one.

RCAF MALAHAT

VXCQ

Radiotelephone "Catapult B"

M.467 and B171

1946 – 1952

86-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1944

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia and a photo can be seen between pages 116 and 117 in volume two. Transferred to Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on May 31st, 1946, and sailed around via the Panama Canal. Canadian Warship Names states this vessel joined the RCAF fleet in 1946. In September 1949 this vessel became stranded up in the Hudson Strait and was rescued by HMCS SWANSEA. This was the longest tow by a Canadian Frigate. The tow was one of eleven hundred miles from where SWANSEA found her to Goose Bay, Labrador. This incident is recorded on pages 144 to 146, along with a photograph of this vessel in the book HMCS SWANSEA by Fraser M. McKee. In 1957 this vessel became the Canadian Naval Auxiliary Vessel (CNAV) SCATARI with call sign CZFZ and Radiotelephone "Marian". She looked a lot like a small wooden tugboat. The Navy used her on the Great Lakes as a reserve naval training vessel.

RCAF MALECITE

VXCR

Radiotelephone "Extort F"

M.231 – B107 and B159

1941 – 1953

70-foot High Speed Rescue

A sister of RCAF ABNAKI

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

This vessel became HMC HSL231 with call sign CGJX in 1952.

In 1957 this vessel became a yacht and is still registered as MALECITE in 2007.

RCAF MALLARD

M.158 and B100

1937 – 1945

A 38-foot Crash Boat

A Seaplane Tender built in the United Kingdom by the British Power Boat Company

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF MALLARD

VXZG

M.871

1955 – 1964

40-foot High Speed Rescue built in 1955

This one was based at Vancouver with RCAF SKUA and a photo can be seen of this on page 19 in volume two. This vessel was a Canadian built forty-footer that served with the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1955 until 1964. In 1964 this vessel became the Canadian Coast Guard Cutter (CCGC) MALLARD and was a Search and Rescue Vessel based at Vancouver, British Columbia.

RCAF MANDARIN

M.194 and B101

1942

40-foot Range Boat (Type VI)

A Target Towing Vessel converted from an armoured Target Boat built by the British Power Boat Company in the United Kingdom. These vessels were forty feet long, either triple or twin screw and very fast. They were designed for towing hydrofoils and other targets at high speed. A winch with a drum holding many hundred feet of fine steel cable was mounted in the after cockpit. There were no quarters on board for the crew. A distinguishing feature was the downward slope of the bow. This provided additional visibility for the crew when the vessel was at speed. RCAF M.194 MANDARIN was based at Eastern Air Command, Hantsport, Nova Scotia and a photo can be seen of this vessel on page 20 of volume two.

RCAF MANX

Radiotelephone "Event E"

M.851

Served until 1965

40-foot steel High Speed Rescue

Taken over by the Navy on April 1st, 1965 and continued to serve until 1981

RCAF MELVILLE

M.560

1944

60-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type III)

This vessel had accommodation for eight crewmembers and arrived at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, from Shelburne, Nova Scotia, on September 30th, 1944.

Based at Eastern Air Command and a photo of this vessel can be seen on page 18 of volume two.

RCAF MERGANSER

M.441

1942

40-foot Refueling Launch built in 1942

RCAF MERMAID

M.528

Served until 1943

Unknown 52-foot wooden vessel built in 1939

RCAF MICMAC

M.207

1940 – 1943

84-foot Supply Vessel (Type II)

Based at Eastern Air Command

This vessel was wrecked on the East Coast of Nova Scotia on March 6th, 1943.

RCAF MIDNIGHT SUN

M.425

1942 – 1944

70-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1938

Based at Western Air Command

RCAF MOHAWK

M.573 and B139

1944 – 1946

114-foot Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1944

Based at Eastern Air Command and a photo can be seen between pages 130 and 131 in volume two.

This vessel arrived at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on October 22nd, 1944, from her builder's yard. She was built at the John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia, along with fifteen "B" Class Fairmiles for the Royal Canadian and the United States navies. My old friend Captain Charles H. Melanson was in command for her first sea trials. He was very pleased with her but claimed the air force was not that happy with her speed. The air force likes to arrive yesterday so would not likely be impressed with the speed of any vessel. This vessel was still listed as MOHAWK II, a private cargo vessel in the 1979 List of Ships on Register in Canada. The official lists state this vessel is still registered in 2007 and when I mentioned this to Captain Melanson he said he had heard that she went to Newfoundland and must still be there. She must have been well built with good material to have lasted this long.

RCAF MONTAGNAIS

VXCS

Radiotelephone "Event E"

M.234 – B110 and B161

1941 – 1953

70-foot High Speed Rescue

This vessel was a sister of RCAF ABNAKI and was built for the RCAF by the Canadian Power Boat Company in 1941. She was based at Eastern Air Command and a photo can be seen on page 38 of volume two. This vessel was HMC MSL234 with call sign CGWD from 1952 until 1958. This vessel was the yacht MONTAGNAIS in 1964 and renamed VANCOUVER SPIRIT. A photo of this vessel can be seen on page 171 in volume two.

RCAF MURRE

M.398

1942

40-foot General Utility Boat built in 1942

RCAF MUSKOKA

M.704 and B141

1944

65-foot Supply Vessel (Type III)

RCAF NAIAD

M.388

This vessel was a wooden 35-foot Range Boat (Type III) built in 1938 and based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

RCAF NAOMI W

M.595 and B183

1943 – 1945

36-foot wooden General Utility Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF NAUTILUS

M.362

1940

55-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1928

RCAF NICOLA

M.11

1942 - 1946

65 foot length overall Range Boat (Type I)

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia

This vessel is spelled NIKOLA on some of the lists.

RCAF NICTAK

M.447 and B123

Served until 1945

80-foot High Speed Rescue

A former United States Navy PT6.

Based at Eastern Air Command and a photo can be seen between pages 22 and 23 of volume one.

RCAF NIMPKISH

Radiotelephone “Chapel Z”

M.535

1944 – 1961

60-foot Supply Vessel (Type III) built in 1944

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia and a photo under repair can be seen between pages 162 and 163 in volume two.

RCAF NIMPKISH II
M.975
1960 – 1965
75-foot Supply Vessel (Type II)

RCAF NO.4
“M” Number unknown
Fire Fighting Launch

RCAF NOOTKA
VXCT
Radiotelephone “Giddy U”
M.208 and B105
1941 – 1951
70-foot High Speed Rescue

This vessel was a sister of RCAF ABNAKI based at Eastern Air Command.
This vessel was in collision with the Steam Ship PONTIAC with call sign KFML on November 23rd, 1943, in the approaches to Halifax Harbour. She had six feet cut off her stern. There were no casualties. She was repaired at RCAF Station Dartmouth and reentered service on June 17th, 1944. This vessel was HMC HSL208 with call sign CYWZ and pendant 208 from 1952 until 1958 and her radiotelephone was “Calamity N”. I found no record of her after 1958. One of these vessels was used as living accommodation in Summerside, Prince Edward Island and this may be the one. A photo of HMC HSL208 and RCAF NOOTKA can be seen on page 6 of volume two. Two photos can be seen between pages 146 and 147 in volume two but her number is labeled wrong. There are more photos and story on page 173 in volume two.

RCAF OK SERVICE V
M.361 and B116
1940 – 1944
112-foot Supply Vessel (Type I) built in 1940

Based at Eastern Air Command

This vessel was returned to her owners on April 24th, 1944, and she first appears in the International List of Ship Stations with call sign CYBG in 1947.

RCAF OSOYOOS
M.414 and B120
59-foot High Speed Rescue that served until 1945

A former United States Navy PT4 fitted with three Packard engines coupled to three shafts, and built by Fisher Boat Works, Detroit, Michigan. This vessel was the former HMC HSL263 with pendant V263. A photo can be seen between pages 22 and 23 volume one and another two in appendices one of volume one.

RCAF PELICAN
VXCW
Radiotelephone “Inlet V”
M.264
1941
38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat
Based at Western Air Command, Ucluelet, British Columbia

RCAF PENGUIN
M.442 and B131
40-foot Refueling Launch

RCAF PETREL
M.431
1942 – 1946

38-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1930
Based at Western Air Command, Coal Harbour, British Columbia

RCAF PINTAIL

M.165

1936

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat and a photo can be seen between pages 130 and 131 in volume two.

RCAF PLOVER

M.432

1942

35-foot Range Boat (Type II) built in 1941

The former RCAF EVERGREEN I as listed in Canadian Warship Names

Based at Western Air Command, Ucluelet, British Columbia

RCAF PUFFIN

VXCX

Radiotelephone "Charity W"

M.430

1942

39-foot wooden Range Boat (Type II) built in 1941

This was the former fishing boat SEAMAID Y II

Based at Western Air Command, Alliford Bay, British Columbia

RCAF RANDY BOY

M.503

Served until 1945

Unknown

RCAF RED BIRD

M.389

1940 – 1945

Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF RED BIRD Y

"M" Number unknown

1942

Unknown vessel 31-feet in length

RCAF REDHEAD

VXCZ

M.201 and B102

1940

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

This vessel was built by Grew Boats Limited Penetanguishene, Ontario and was fitted with new Chrysler Engines on September 1st, 1944. Redhead is a type of duck. RCAF M.201 REDHEAD was the executive wagon of this fleet around Nova Scotia during the war. Any high ranking officer or official was transported in this vessel or her identical sister RCAF EIDER if this one was not available. This one was fitted with the first radar of the day and radio direction finding. Radio direction finding was the big navigational aid of the 1930's and 1940's.

RCAF RED WING

M.1

Launch

RCAF RED WING Y
"M" Number unknown
1942
Unknown

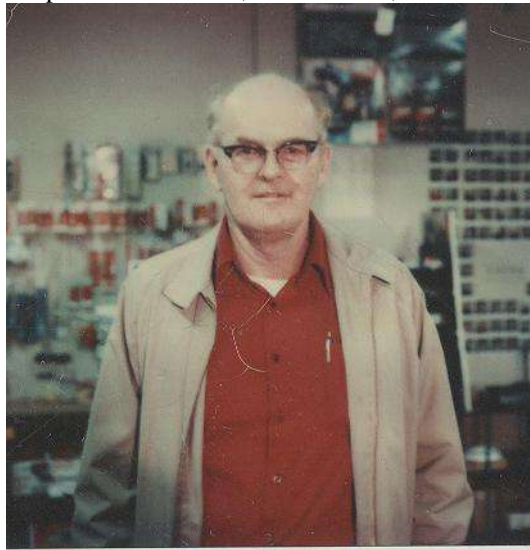
RCAF REEL FISHER
M.530 and B167
1942 – 1944
61-foot Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1940
Based at Western Air Command

RCAF RETREIVER
M.542
147-foot wooden Transport Barge built in 1944
This vessel was a sister to M.541 TRANSPORTER

RCAF RIDEAU SPRAY
M.301
41-foot General Utility Boat built in 1929 but no dates of service were listed

RCAF RINGBILL
M.203 and B104
1940
38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat
Based at Eastern Air Command
This vessel was equipped with a Buchanan eight engine and was transferred to Shelburne, Nova Scotia, on November 27th, 1943

RCAF ROVEN
M.400 and B130
1942 – 1946
40-foot wooden General Utility Boat built in 1942 called a Range Boat Type II in some of the records. RCAF ROVEN had one 85 horsepower General Motors Diesel Engine called a Gray Marine Diesel, and could make around nine knots. Her Skipper was Sgt. Gus Henneberry, Sambro, Nova Scotia. Engineer Cpl. Lawrence Sweeney. Wireless Operator Bill Miller, Plaster Rock, New Brunswick.



HARC Files

Bill Miller

Bill held amateur call sign VE1AKB that was changed to VE9AKB when New Brunswick went to the VE9

prefix for amateur radio call signs.

The ROVEN's Radio Station was a Bendix AR1 General Coverage Receiver and AT1 Transmitter for two channels of radiotelegraph only; 3333 and 6666 kHz.

Based at Eastern Air Command, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

RCAF ROVEN departed Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, for Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, on November 6th, 1943, and returned to Dartmouth from Yarmouth on September 5th, 1945.

RCAF RUFF

Radiotelephone "Event F"

M.807

1953 – 1965

25-foot steel Aircraft Crash Boat built in 1950

A Ruff is a European or Asiatic Sandpiper.

RCAF SANDERLING

M.874

Served until 1965

25-foot steel Aircraft Crash Boat

RCAF SANDPIPER

M.385

1942

40-foot Refueling Launch

RCAF SANDPIPER

Radiotelephone "Extort F"

M.808

Served until 1965

25-foot steel Aircraft Crash Boat

RCAF SARANA

M.304

This vessel was a wooden vessel built in 1936 of 36-feet

RCAF SCOTER

M.172

1938 – 1946

38-foot wooden Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Bella Bella/Annette Island, British Columbia and was still registered to the Department of Public Works, Ottawa, Ontario, in 1989 and that is 51 years for a wooden boat. The registration on this vessel was suspended on August 29th, 2002. This meant that the Department of Transport could not locate the vessel and presumed that it was out of existence.

RCAF SEAGULL

M.607

General Utility Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command

Built by Hunter Boats, Orillia, Ontario

Transferred from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, to Trenton, Ontario, on May 26th, 1946 and a photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF SEA HORSE

M.380

1943 – 1945

34-foot Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF SEA-MEW

M.591

1943

Aircraft Tender

Based at Western Air Command

RCAF SEA SPRAY

M.598

Supply Vessel (Type III)

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF SEKANI

M.205

1940

84-foot Supply Vessel (Type II)

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia and this vessel carried Dingy M-383 as her lifeboat. This vessel received a quick rename when it was pointed out that its previous name, RCAF SIWASH was not a proper first nation tribe.

RCAF SETON

M.532 and B175

1943

60-foot Supply Vessel (Type III) built in 1943

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF SHELDRAKE

M.195 and B121

1942

40-foot wooden Range Boat (Type VI)

RCAF SHOVELLER

M.200

1940 – 1953

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Patricia Bay, British Columbia and a photo can be seen at the back of volume two.

RCAF SILVER SPRING

M.433

Range Boat

Renamed RCAF SNIPE

RCAF SIYO II

M.5

1942 - 1943

39 foot Wooden General Utility Boat

RCAF SKEENA MAID

M.536 and B170

1943 – 1944

Unknown 47-foot wooden vessel built in 1940

Based at Western Air Command

RCAF SKUA

Radiotelephone “Extort G”

M.850

1953 – 1964

40-foot steel High Speed Rescue built in 1952

This one was based beneath the Burrard Bridge, British Columbia and a photo can be seen on page 14 of volume two and another on page 19 of volume two. This vessel was transferred to the Canadian Coast Guard and because the Coast Guard already had CCGS SKUA, a World War II type landing craft, she was renamed MOORHEN and as the CCGC MOORHEN was based at Vancouver as a Search and Rescue vessel. It is rather odd that she received a name within the Coast Guard fleet. The Canadian Coast Guard built a fleet of these 40-foot steel vessels described at the end of this RCAF Marine Craft section. The Coast Guard called them a cutter with the acronym CCGC as in Canadian Coast Guard Cutter. The first one was CCGC 101 that had been purchased from the U.S. Coast Guard. These Canadian cutters were built at various Canadian shipyards. They were not named but numbered beginning with 101.

RCAF SNIPE

VXDB

Radiotelephone “Jingle Q”

M.433

1942 – 1952

38-foot Range Boat (Type II)

Based at Western Air Command, Bella Bella, British Columbia

A Range Patrol Utility Boat with a diesel engine that served the Workshop Seaplane Tender M.159. This vessel was the former RCAF SILVER SPRING and a photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF SNOWBIRD II

VXNZ

M.769

1949 – 1953

203-foot steel Supply Vessel (Type I) built in 1942

A former United States Navy Landing Craft that had seen service in the South Pacific during World War II. This vessel was the former USS LSM-323 according to Squadron Leader S. C. Burridge the officer commanding 122 Marine Squadron, RCAF. He made that statement when the vessel first arrived at Patricia Bay, British Columbia. LSM was the acronym for a Landing Ship Medium. Canadian Warship Names states this vessel joined the RCAF fleet in 1949. According to The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons Volume II page 8 this is the same vessel as RCAF SNOWBIRD. The RCAF managed to obtain it while frozen in at Tuktoyaktuk at the mouth of the McKenzie River in the North West Territories in 1951. It had been up north for three years and was to be used to haul freight from Cambridge Bay to Tuktoyaktuk, but this project did not work out. An RCAF crew brought the vessel down the west coast, through the Panama Canal and up to Halifax. The RCAF Marine Squadrons were terminated at this point and this vessel remained working for the air force as a supply ship for their northern stations with a civilian crew. Photos of this vessel can be seen between pages 8 and 9 of volume two. NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive has four interesting photographs of USS LSM-323 and some detail on her World War II service in the Pacific.



Rolf F. Illsley

USS LSM-323 somewhere in the Pacific in 1945



United States Navy Photograph

This is an overhead view of USS LSM-437 a sister of USS LSM-323

RCAF SNOW GOOSE

VXDC

Radiotelephone "Equal S"

M.613

1944

40-foot Range Boat (Type II) built in 1944

RCAF SNOW PRINCE

M.348 and B152

1941 – 1944

66-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1937

Based at Western Air Command

Canadian Warship Names states it joined the RCAF fleet on September 12th, 1942.

RCAF SONGHEE

VXDF

Radiotelephone "Gismo T"

M.468

1944 – 1953

86-foot Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1944

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

Canadian Warship Names states this vessel served from 1944 until July 24th, 1953.

RCAF SOOKE

M.533

1943 – 1946

60-foot Supply Vessel (Type III) built in 1943

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia but the records indicate it was at

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on July 24th, 1945

RCAF SPOONBILL

M.351

1940

35-foot General Utility Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command, North Sydney, Nova Scotia

Owned by Joe Penny and had a new propeller fitted at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on January 2nd, 1944.

RCAF SPRAY IV

"M" Number unknown

Unknown – her D.O.T. number was 312722

This vessel was attached to RCAF Station Dartmouth in the 1920's

RCAF SPRINGTIME

M.428

Listed in Canadian Warship Names

Renamed RCAF CURLEW

RCAF SQUAMISH

M.469

95-foot Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1937

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

RCAF STUART

M.531 and B174

1943 – 1946

60-foot Supply Vessel (Type III) built in 1943

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia and a photo can be seen between pages 164 and 165 in volume two.

RCAF SWAN

M.271

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

RCAF TAKULI

VXDG

Radiotelephone “Trium H”

M.232 – B108 and B160

1941 – 1952

70-foot High Speed Rescue

A sister of RCAF ABNAKI

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia

This vessel arrived at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, after sailing around via the Panama Canal on October 14th, 1947. This vessel was HMC HSL232 with call sign CYWB from 1952 until 1958.

Radiotelephone “Chapel Y” This one was believed to have been destroyed by fire and a photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF TEAL

VXDJ

Radiotelephone “Chapel A”

M.266

38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

Based at Western Air Command, Bella Bella, British Columbia and a photo can be seen between pages 162 and 163 in volume two.

RCAF TRANSPORTER

M.541

147-foot Transport Barge

This vessel was a sister to RCAF M.542 RETREIVER

Based at Eastern Air Command and a photo can be seen in Appendices One at the back of volume one and another on page 82 of volume two.

RCAF UMBRETTA

M.493

1942

40-foot General Utility Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command

Helped RCAF M.302 tow RCAF BEAVER on January 15th, 1944 and towed RCAF DETECTOR to the Marine Slips on January 25th, 1944.

RCAF VIKI K

M.495

Range Boat

Renamed RCAF COOT

RCAF WALTER M

M.540

1942 – 1944

54-foot wooden Supply Vessel (Type II) built in 1925

Based at Western Air Command

RCAF WHISTLER

M.292

1942

40-foot Range Boat (Type III)

Based at Western Air Command, Coal Harbour, British Columbia

RCAF WIDGEON

M.514

1942

40-foot wooden General Utility Boat built in 1937

Based at Eastern Air Command

This vessel departed Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on August 16th, 1945, for a convalescent home at St. Andrew's, New Brunswick. The total crew was two men, both Corporals a seaman and engineer. This vessel was capable of carrying thirty passengers. This is another potential name to create confusion with the Grumman aircraft of the same name.

RCAF WILLET

M.518

1942

30-foot Range Boat (Type III) and Crash Tender built by Shepherd Boat Works, Niagara.

Based at Western Air Command, Vancouver, British Columbia but this vessel was at Eastern Air Command in 1943. These records often do not agree.

RCAF WOODCOCK

Radiotelephone "Fido H"

M.809

Served until 1965

25-foot steel Aircraft Crash Boat

Canadian Warship Names states this vessel was taken over by the navy on April 1st, 1965 as CFAV WOODCOCK and remained with the navy until about 1982.

RCAF ZUIZAN

M.397 and B128

1942

40-foot General Utility Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command, North Sydney, Nova Scotia

This is a list of the RCAF Marine Craft in numerical order by "M" number:

Further detail on the vessels assigned a name can be found in the list of these vessels by name in alphabetical order above. A lot of the numbers were not assigned as I suspected when I first became interested in this fleet.

RCAF M.1

BLUE BILL

RCAF M.1

EMPRESS

RCAF M.1

RED WING

RCAF M.2

1928

Rowboat

Renumbered M.115

RAF M.2
1941
Bombing-up Dinghy
Allocated to No. 32 O.T.U. RAF Patricia Bay but controlled by the RCAF

RCAF M.3
1928
Rowboat
Renumbered M.102

RCAF M.3
ADVENTURER

RCAF M.4
1928
16 foot Rowboat

RCAF M.5
SIYO II

RCAF M.7
RCAF M.8
Both were a Canoe

RCAF M.9
AMARYLLIS

RCAF M.10
CHILKO

RCAF M.11
NIKOLA

RCAF M.12
ATLIN

RCAF M.12A
1942
The Lifeboat on RCAF M.12 ATLIN

RCAF M.13
RCAF M.14
1942
Both were a 30-foot length overall Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF M.96
EMPRESS

RCAF M.102
1928
Rowboat
Renumbered was M.3 in 1928

RCAF M.115
1928
Rowboat

Renumbered was M.2 in 1928

RCAF M.129

Launch

RCAF M.137

General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.138

RCAF M.139

Both were a Medium Scow

RCAF M.140

16 foot Rowboat

RCAF M.142A

General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.142B

General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.145

Collapsible Canoe

RCAF M.150

16 foot Rowboat

RCAF M.151

Rowboat

RCAF M.153

LUCKY PEGGY

RCAF M.154

Rowboat

RCAF M.155

General Utility Boat – Aircraft Tender

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

An open boat built by the British Power Boat Company, United Kingdom. It was fitted with a forty-eight horsepower engine and capable of a speed of eighteen knots.

RCAF M.156

18 foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.157

HERON

RCAF M.158

MALLARD

RCAF M.159

Radiotelephone “Charity X”

1936 – 1951

26-foot Workshop Scow

Based at Western Air Command

This was a workshop and seaplane tender

RCAF M.160
ASTRA

RCAF M.161
Rowboat

RCAF M.163
Canoe

RCAF M.164
18-foot Aircraft Tender – Dinghy

RCAF M.165
PINTAIL

RCAF M.166
Canoe

RCAF M.167
15-foot Skiff

RCAF M.168
RCAF M.169
Both were a Skiff

RCAF M.170
18-foot Aircraft Tender - Dinghy

RCAF M.171
The official listing is a - Launch
On page 66 in the book "Sea Wings" by J. A. "Tony" Foster there is a photo of M-171. This was taken on August 26th, 1939, at Rockcliffe, Ontario. This vessel appears to be about twenty feet long with an inboard engine with an exhaust out the stern. It has no Foc'sul. There are three airmen in the boat and one is right up in the bow.

RCAF M.172
SCOTER

RCAF M.173
RCAF M.174
RCAF M.175
RCAF M.176
All 4 were a Rowboat

RCAF M.178
DUCK

RCAF M.179
16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.180
Rowboat

RCAF M.182

1938
40-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.183
50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.184
50-foot Medium Scow

RCAF M.185
Workshop Scow
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.186
Refueling Scow

RCAF M.187
RCAF M.188
RCAF M.189
All 3 were an Aircraft Tender in service in 1940

RCAF M.190
1940
18-foot bombing-up dinghy
This dinghy was built by Hatley Craft Limited

RCAF M.191
1940
18-foot bombing-up dinghy
Identical to RCAF M.190
This dinghy was built by A. Litton and Company Limited, Vancouver, BC
A photo can be seen at the back of volume two.

RCAF M.192
1940
18-foot Aircraft Tender
This vessel was built by A. Litton and Company Limited, Vancouver, BC

RCAF M.193
1940
18-foot Aircraft Tender
This vessel was built by Hatley Craft Limited

RCAF M.194
MANDARIN

RCAF M.195
SHELDRAKE

RCAF M.196
BITERN

RCAF M.197
CORMORANT

RCAF M.198

GREBE

RCAF M.199
GADWALL

RCAF M.200
SHOVELLER

RCAF M.201
REDHEAD

RCAF M.202
EIDER

RCAF M.203
RINGBILL

RCAF M.204
GARGANEY

RCAF M.205
SEKANI

RCAF M.206
HAIDA

RCAF M.207
MICMAC

RCAF M.208
NOOTKA

RCAF M.209
RCAF M.210
RCAF M.211
RCAF M.212
RCAF M.213
RCAF M.214
RCAF M.215
RCAF M.216
RCAF M.217
RCAF M.218
RCAF M.219
RCAF M.220
RCAF M.221

All 13 were 15-foot Rowboats in service in 1940

RCAF M.222
1940
15-foot Rowboat
Based at Eastern Air Command for Northern Bases

RCAF M.223
1940
18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy built by Hunter/Buchanan, Orillia, Ontario
These were eighteen feet long and eleven were built for the air force in 1939.

RCAF M.224

RCAF M.225

RCAF M.226

RCAF M.227

RCAF M.228

All 5 were a Bombing-up Dinghy in service in 1940

RCAF M.229

1940

18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

A photo can be seen in Appendices One at the back of volume one.

RCAF M.230

1940

Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.231

MALECITE

RCAF M.232

TAKULI

RCAF M.233

ABNAKI

RCAF M.234

MONTAGNAIS

RCAF M.235

HURON

RCAF M.236

1940

Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.237

1940

34-foot Rowboat with a 9.8 foot breadth and 4 foot depth

RCAF M.238

Rowboat

RCAF M.240

1940

18-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.241

General Purpose Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.242

1940 – 1946

50-foot Medium Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.243
1940
50-foot Medium Scow
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.244
1940
51-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.245
RCAF M.246
RCAF M.247
RCAF M.248
All 4 were a 50-foot Derrick Scow in service in 1940

RCAF M.249
RCAF M.250
RCAF M.251
All 3 were a 50-foot Medium Scow in service in 1940

RCAF M.252
1940
16-foot Small Scow

RCAF M.253
RCAF M.254
RCAF M.255
All 3 were a 40-foot Refueling Scow in service 1940

RCAF M.256
40-foot Derrick Scow in service 1940

RCAF M.257
40-foot Refueling Scow in service 1940

RCAF M.258
1940
Refueling Scow

RCAF M.259
1940
Refueling Scow
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.260
1940
Refueling Scow

RCAF M-261
1940
Rowboat

RCAF M.262
General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.263

General Purpose Scow
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.264
PELICAN

RCAF M.265
LOON

RCAF M.266
TEAL

RCAF M.267
BRANT

RCAF M.271
SWAN

RCAF M.272
RCAF M.273
Both were a Rowboat in service 1940

RCAF M.274
RCAF M.275
RCAF M.276
RCAF M.277
RCAF M.278
All 5 were a 16-foot Rowboat in service 1940

RCAF M.279
ANJOANNE

RCAF M.280
RCAF M.281
Both were a Bombing-up Dinghy in service 1940

RCAF M.282
1940
Bombing-up Dinghy
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.283
BINGBALL

RCAF M.284
1940
18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.285
RCAF M.286
1940
Both were an 18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.287
1940

18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.288

18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.289

1940

Medium Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.290

KITTIWAKE

RCAF M.291

FULMAR

RCAF M.292

WHISTLER

RCAF M.293

1940 – 1945

Medium Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.294

1940 – 1946

50-foot General Purpose Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

RCAF M.295

KAGOME

RCAF M.296

CAREY

RCAF M.297

GLENFRUIN

RCAF M.298

EVA CLARE

RCAF M.300

ELAINE W

RCAF M.301

RIDEAU SPRAY

RCAF M.302

ARISTOCRAT

RCAF M.303

CYGNET II

RCAF M.304

SARANA

RCAF M.305
ARRESTEUR

RCAF M.306
DETECTOR

RCAF M.307
FREDERICK H II

RCAF M.308
1940
Rowboat – a lifeboat for RCAF M.232 TAKULI
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.309
1941
18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.310
RCAF M.311
Both were Aircraft Tenders

RCAF M.312
RCAF M.313
RCAF M.314
All 3 were an 18-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.315
18-foot Aircraft Tender
Based at Eastern Air Command
Stored for the winter at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on December 22nd, 1943

RCAF M.316
18-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.317
RCAF M.318
Both were Aircraft Tenders

RCAF M.319
Aircraft Tender – Dinghy

RCAF M.320
Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.321
18-foot Aircraft Tender
An eighteen-foot Bomb Dinghy built by the British Power Boat Company, United Kingdom.

RCAF M.322
RCAF M.323
RCAF M.325
All 3 were Aircraft Tenders

RCAF M.326
18-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.327

RCAF M.328

RCAF M.329

All 3 were an 18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.330

1941

18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.331

RCAF M.332

RCAF M.333

RCAF M.334

All 4 were an 18-foot Bombing-up Dinghy

RCAF M.335

RCAF M.336

RCAF M.337

RCAF M.338

All 4 were a 50-foot Medium Scow

RCAF M.340

Refueling Scow

RCAF M.341

40-foot Derrick Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command, Seven Islands, Quebec

RCAF M.342

RCAF M.343

Both were a 50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.344

1941

50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.345

40-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.346

HALDO

RCAF M.347

DORIS III

RCAF M.348

SNOW PRINCE

RCAF M.350

COMBAT

RCAF M.350A

Rowboat – a lifeboat for RCAF M.350 COMBAT

RCAF M.351

SPOONBILL

RCAF M.361
OK SERVICE V

RCAF M.362
NAUTILUS

RCAF M.363
Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.364
DABCHICK

RCAF M.365
1942
38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat
Based at Eastern Air Command, Mont Joli, Quebec

RCAF M.366
Aircraft Tender in service until 1946

RCAF M.369
General Utility Boat

RCAF M.370
RCAF M.371
Both were a 16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.378
BOUNTY

RCAF M.380
SEA HORSE

RCAF M.381
16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.382
A lifeboat for RCAF M.206 HAIDA

RCAF M.383
A lifeboat for RCAF M.205 SEKANI
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.384
BUTTERBALL

RCAF M.385
SANDPIPER

RCAF M.386
1943
40-foot Refueling Launch or Gasoline Launch
Based at Eastern Air Command, Goose Bay, Labrador, during the summers

RCAF M.387
Unknown but whatever it was it served until 1946

RCAF M.388
NAIAD

RCAF M.389
RED BIRD

RCAF M.390
16-foot Small Scow

RCAF M.391
16-foot Bombing-up Raft

RCAF M.392
RCAF M.393
Both were a 16-foot Small Scow

RCAF M.395
16-foot Small Scow or a Towed Bombing-up Raft
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.396
KINGFISHER

RCAF M.397
ZUIZAN

RCAF M.398
MURRE

RCAF M.399
IBIS

RCAF M.400
ROVEN

RCAF M.402
General Utility Boat
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.407
ABADIK

RCAF M.408
BANOSKIK

RCAF M.409
16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.410
50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.411
Aircraft Tender that served until 1946

RCAF M.413
BRAS D'OR

RCAF M.414
OSOYOOS

RCAF M.415
16-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.416
A Rowboat that served on RCAF M.427 B.C. STAR

RCAF M.417
50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.418
RCAF M.420
RCAF M.421
RCAF M.422
RCAF M.423
All 5 were a 16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.425
MIDNIGHT SUN

RCAF M.425A
16-foot Rowboat that served as the lifeboat on RCAF M.425 MIDNIGHT SUN

RCAF M.426
CAPE CANSO

RCAF M.427
B.C. STAR

RCAF M.428
CURLEW

RCAF M.429
GULL

RCAF M.429A
Rowboat – the lifeboat in RCAF M.429 GULL

RCAF M.430
PUFFIN

RCAF M.430A
Rowboat – the lifeboat in RCAF M.430 PUFFIN

RCAF M.431
PETREL

RCAF M.432
PLOVER

RCAF M.432B
Lifeboat for RCAF M.432 PLOVER

RCAF M.433
SNIPE

RCAF M.434
1942
Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF M.435
1942
30-foot Range Boat (Type III) or Range Safety/Target Towing Boat
Based at Eastern Air Command, Trenton, Ontario

RCAF M.436
RCAF M.437
Both were a 30-foot Range Boat (Type III) in service 1942

RCAF M.438
General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.439
1943
40-foot General Utility Duty Boat
Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

RCAF M.440
ALBATROSS

RCAF M.441
MERGANSER

RCAF M.442
PENGUIN

RCAF M.443
CRANE

RCAF M.444
GANDER

RCAF M.445
GODWIT

RCAF M.446
AUKLET

RCAF M.447
NICTAK

RCAF M.448
GOOSE

RCAF M.448A
The Lifeboat on RCAF M.448 GOOSE

RCAF M.449
JAGER

RCAF M.449A
Lifeboat on RCAF M.449 JAGER

RCAF M.450
RCAF M.451
RCAF M.452
All 3 were a 16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.453
16-foot Rowboat that served until 1946

RCAF M.454
RCAF M.455
Both were a 16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.456
ESKIMO

RCAF M.458
RCAF M.460
RCAF M.462
RCAF M.464
RCAF M.465
RCAF M.466
All 6 were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.467
MALAHAT

RCAF M.468
SONGHEE

RCAF M.469
SQUAMISH

RCAF M.470
1942
20-foot Aircraft Tender built in 1942
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.471
1942
20-foot Aircraft Tender built in 1942
Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
M.471 was in for hull repairs on January 18th, 1944, and was launched and declared serviceable on April 10th, 1944.

RCAF M.472
RCAF M.473
RCAF M.474
1942
These 3 were 20-foot Aircraft Tenders built in 1942 and all, M.470 to M.474 were identical

RCAF M.475

1943

40-foot General Utility or Duty Boat

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

A photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF M.476

Served until 1946

Derrick Scow

RCAF M.477

Served until 1946

50-foot Medium Scow

RCAF M.478

16-foot General Purpose Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.479

40-foot Derrick Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

M-479 was picked up on January 12th, 1945, after being adrift at sea for several days.

RCAF M.480

Derrick Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.481

Served until 1946

Medium Scow

RCAF M.482

RCAF M.483

Both were a Refueling Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.484

20-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.485

Derrick Scow

Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.486

A. T. and B. No. 17

RCAF M.487

RCAF M.488

RCAF M.489

RCAF M.490

1942

All 4 were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.491

RCAF M.492

Both were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.493
UMBRETTA

RCAF M.494
EGRET

RCAF M.495
COOT

RCAF M.496
TERN

RCAF M.497
CETOMA

RCAF M.499
Served until 1945
Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF M.500
Served until 1945
40-foot wooden Range Boat (Type III) built in 1943

RCAF M.501
Served until 1945
40-foot wooden Range Boat (Type III) built in 1943
This vessel when sold was renamed GULL LAKE

RCAF M.502
FLAMINGO

RCAF M.503
RANDY BOY

RCAF M.504
1942
66-foot Water Scow built in 1941

RCAF M.505
Aircraft Tender
Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
This vessel had a damaged propeller on December 5th, 1943.

RCAF M.506
18-foot Launch
An aircraft tender that was a fast inboard launch
Based at Eastern Air Command, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
This vessel was placed in storage for the winter on December 22nd, 1943.
A photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF M.507
Aircraft Tender
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.508
1942 – 1946
20-foot Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.509
1943
Aircraft Tender
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.510
1943
Aircraft Tender
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.511
Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.512
RCAF M.513
1943
Both were 20-foot Aircraft Tenders built in 1943 and based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.514
WIDGEON

RCAF M.515
M.515 and B135
1943
30-foot Range Boat (Type VI)

RCAF M.516
M.516 and B133
1943
30-foot Range Boat (Type V)
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.517
1943
30-foot Range Boat (Type III)

RCAF M.518
WILLET

RCAF M.519
M.519 and B136
1943
30-foot Range Boat (Type VI) that was built in 1943 and was self propelled and weighed 2,500 lbs.
Based at Eastern Air Command and a photo can be seen in appendices one at the back of volume one.

RCAF M.520
1943
30-foot Range Boat (Type VI), Duty Boat and Target Towing
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.521
GANNET

RCAF M.522
BEAVER

RCAF M.523
1942
16-foot Small Scow built in 1942

RCAF M.524
16-foot Small Scow

RCAF M.525
Served until 1945
General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.526
Served until 1946
78-foot wooden Large Scow built in 1925

RCAF M.528
MERMAID

RCAF M.529
LE GAULOIS

RCAF M.530
REEL FISHER

RCAF M.531
STUART

RCAF M.531A
Lifeboat for RCAF M.531 STUART

RCAF M.532
SETON

RCAF M.533
SOOKE

RCAF M.534
BABINE

RCAF M.535
NIMPKISH

RCAF M.536
SKEENA MAID

RCAF M.536A
Lifeboat for RCAF M.536 SKEENA MAID

RCAF M.537
ARROW

RCAF M.538

Canoe

RCAF M.539

1943

16-foot Rowboat built in 1943

RCAF M.540

WALTER M

RCAF M.541

TRANSPORTER

RCAF M.542

RETRIEVER

RCAF M.543

Served until 1945

General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.546

16-foot Rowboat on RCAF M.536 SKEENA MAID

RCAF M.547

Lifeboat on RCAF M.540 WALTER M

RCAF M.548

RCAF M.552

Both were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.553

RCAF M.554

RCAF M.555

RCAF M.556

RCAF M.557

All 5 were 16-foot Small Scows

RCAF M.558

1943 – 1945

90-foot General Purpose Scow built in 1943

RCAF M.559

1943

90-foot Large Scow built in 1943

RCAF M.560

MELVILLE

RCAF M.564

16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.565

24-foot Small Scow

RCAF M.567

General Purpose Scow

A good photo of this scow is found between pages 22 and 23 in volume one.

RCAF M.569
20-foot General Purpose Scow

RCAF M.570
1943 – 1965
24-foot Small Scow

RCAF M.571
Unknown
Based at Eastern Air Command

RCAF M.572
1943
Lightering Scow built in 1943

RCAF M.573
MOHAWK

RCAF M.574
RCAF M.575
RCAF M.576
RCAF M.577
All 4 were 90-foot Large Scows

RCAF M.579
FUSILIER

RCAF M.580
ALOMA/CORMACK

RCAF M.582
HILI-KUM

RCAF M.583
90-foot Large Scow

RCAF M.584
1943
59-foot Large Scow

RCAF M.585
1943
40-foot General Utility Boat – A former Cape Sable Island Boat
Based at Eastern Air Command Nova Scotia
Departed Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, for Shelburne, Nova Scotia, on November 27th, 1943, and was transferred to North Sydney, Nova Scotia, on May 12th, 1944.

RCAF M.586
1943
40-foot General Utility Boat and Range Boat that was sheathed against the ice and was based at Eastern Air Command, Goose Bay, Labrador, during the summers. The sheathing against the ice was probably extra planking of about ½ inch where ice would rub against the vessels hull.

RCAF M.587
1943

40-foot General Utility Boat built in 1943
Based at Eastern Air Command
M.587 could haul twenty bags of coal.

RCAF M.591
SEA MEW

RCAF M.592
DEERLEAP

RCAF M.594
Bombing-up Raft

RCAF M.595
NAOMI W

RCAF M.596
HESQUIAT

RCAF M.597
KIMSQUIT

RCAF M.598
SEA SPRAY

RCAF M.599
16-foot Rowboat
Transferred from Eastern Air Command to NO 3 RD, Vancouver, BC March 1944

RCAF M.600
16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.601
Served until 1946
16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.603
16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.604
Aircraft Tender

RCAF M.607
SEAGULL

RCAF M.608
1944
38-foot Aircraft Crash Boat

RCAF M.609
BALDPATE

RCAF M.610
BLACK GOOSE

RCAF M.611

BLUE GOOSE

RCAF M.612
GRAY GOOSE

RCAF M.613
SNOW GOOSE

RCAF M.614
CANADA GOOSE

RCAF M.615
LAPWING

RCAF M.616
Unknown

RCAF M.617
HARLEQUIN

RCAF M.618
RCAF M.619
Both were a Rowboat for Winter Rescue

RCAF M.620
Served until 1946
40-foot Medium Scow

RCAF M.622
RCAF M.623
Both were an 18-foot Sailing Sloop

RCAF M.624
RCAF M.625
RCAF M.626
RCAF M.627
RCAF M.628
RCAF M.629
RCAF M.630
RCAF M.631
RCAF M.632
All 9 were 16-foot Rowboats Transferred from Eastern Air Command to NO 3 RD, Vancouver, BC March 1944 with RCAF M.599

RCAF M.633
50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.639
GENERAL MACKENZIE

RCAF M.640
G. of G. No. 8

RCAF M.641
1944
25-foot Aircraft Tender built in 1944

RCAF M.642
RCAF M.643
RCAF M.644
All 3 were a Dory

RCAF M.645
RCAF M.646
1944
Both were 50-foot Landing Barges

RCAF M.648
RCAF M.649
Both were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.650
GILLEY NO 21

RCAF M.651
RCAF M.652
Both were a 27-foot Montague Whaler

RCAF M.654
KADIAC

RCAF M.655
Served until 1946
Dory on RCAF M.447 NICTAK

RCAF M.656
RCAF M.657
Both were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.658
50-foot Derrick Scow

RCAF M.659
RCAF M.660
RCAF M.661
RCAF M.662
All 4 were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.663
RCAF M.664
Both were 16-foot Skiffs

RCAF M.665
RCAF M.666
RCAF M.667
All 3 were Skiffs

RCAF M.669
Rowboat for Winter Rescue

RCAF M.671
RCAF M.672

RCAF M.673
All 3 were 16-foot Rowboats

RCAF M.674
Small Scow

RCAF M.675
16-foot Dory

RCAF M.679
Towing Dory

RCAF M.680
Served until 1945
Dory on RCAF M.413 BRAS D'OR

RCAF M.682
Small Scow

RCAF M.683
Served until 1945
Dory on RCAF M.414 OSOYOOS

RCAF M.687
Unknown

RCAF M.688
16-foot Lifeboat

RCAF M.689
16-foot Lifeboat on RCAF M.573 MOHAWK

RCAF M.690
16-foot Lifeboat

RCAF M.693
RCAF M.694
Both were a 16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.695
Served until 1945
Dory on RCAF M.407 ABADIK

RCAF M.696
Served until 1945
Dory on RCAF M.408 BANOSKIK

RCAF M.697
RCAF M.698
RCAF M.699
All 3 were a Dory

RCAF M.700
20-foot Sailing Sloop

RCAF M.701

16-foot Rowboat

RCAF M.702

Dory

RCAF M.703

ALLIGATOR

RCAF M.704

MUSKOKA

RCAF M.705

RCAF M.706

Both were a Dory

RCAF M.707

RCAF M.708

Both were a Lifeboat

RCAF M.711

Unknown

RCAF M.712

1942

20-foot Aircraft Tender built in 1942

RCAF M.716

Served until 1946

Launch

RCAF M.722

Lifeboat on RCAF M.468 SONGHEE

RCAF M.723

Lifeboat on RCAF M.468 SONGHEE

RCAF M.727

Served until 1953

Dory on RCAF M.231 MALECITE

RCAF M.730

Served until 1953

Dory on RCAF M.235 HURON

RCAF M.747

Lifeboat

RCAF M.751

50-foot Medium Scow

RCAF M.755

Canoe

The Marine Craft from about here are the post World War II Craft

RCAF M.756

1948
Aircraft Crash Boat

RCAF M.761
Collapsible Dinghy

RCAF M.769
SNOWBIRD II

RCAF M.790
16-foot aluminum Rowboat

RCAF M.791
Unknown

RCAF M.792
Unknown

RCAF M.793
AVOCET

RCAF M.797
Served until 1955
15-foot fiberglass Skiff

RCAF M.798
Served until 1955
25-foot fiberglass Skiff

RCAF M.806
15-foot fiberglass Rowboat

RCAF M.807
RUFF

RCAF M.808
SANDPIPER

RCAF M.809
WOODCOCK

RCAF M.810
KNOT

RCAF M.847
FLAMINGO

RCAF M.848
ALBATROSS renamed HERON

RCAF M.849
GUILLEMOT

RCAF M.850
SKUA

RCAF M.851
MANX

RCAF M.864
RCAF M.865
RCAF M.868
RCAF M.869
All 4 Aluminum 16-foot outboard boats

RCAF M.871
MALLARD

All the RCAF Marine Craft from M.872 to M.1011 inclusive served until 1965 when the RCAF became part of the Canadian Armed Forces.

RCAF M.872
BLACK DUCK

RCAF M.873
GANNET

RCAF M.874
SANDERLING

RCAF M.877
RCAF M.878
RCAF M.879
RCAF M.880
RCAF M.881
RCAF M.882
RCAF M.884
RCAF M.886
All 8 were a 16-foot Aluminum Outboard Boat

RCAF M.924
A 45-foot Medium Scow

RCAF M.925
EGRET

RCAF M.929
RCAF M.930
RCAF M.931
RCAF M.932
RCAF M.933
RCAF M.934
RCAF M.940
RCAF M.941
All 8 were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.942
RCAF M.943
Both were 14-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.948
RCAF M.949

Both were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.950

RCAF M.951

Both were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats built in 1957

RCAF M.952

RCAF M.953

Both were 14-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.954

RCAF M.955

RCAF M.956

RCAF M.957

RCAF M.958

RCAF M.959

RCAF M.960

RCAF M.961

RCAF M.962

RCAF M.963

RCAF M.964

RCAF M.965

RCAF M.966

All 13 were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.967

RCAF M.968

Both were 14-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.970

RCAF M.971

RCAF M.973

All 3 were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.975

NIMPKISH II

RCAF M.976

RCAF M.977

RCAF M.978

All 3 were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.979

RCAF M.980

RCAF M.981

RCAF M.984

RCAF M.985

RCAF M.986

RCAF M.987

RCAF M.988

RCAF M.989

RCAF M.990

RCAF M.991

All 11 were 14-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.992

RCAF M.993
RCAF M.995
RCAF M.996
All 4 were 16-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

RCAF M.997
RCAF M.998
RCAF M.999
RCAF M.1000
RCAF M.1001
RCAF M.1002
RCAF M.1003
RCAF M.1004
RCAF M.1006
RCAF M.1010
RCAF M.1011
All 11 were 14-foot aluminum Outboard Boats

This is a list of the RCAF Marine Craft in numerical order by “B” number:

One can find further detail on each vessel by looking up the name listed in the list of names in alphabetical order above.

B100 MALLARD
B101 MANDARIN
B102 REDHEAD
B103 EIDER
B104 RINGBILL
B106 NOOTKA
B107 MALECITE
B108 TAKULI
B109 ABNAKI
B110 MONTAGNAIS
B111 HURON
B112 ELAINE W
B113 ARISTOCRAT
B114 ARRESTEUR
B115 DETECTOR
B116 OK SERVICE IV
B117 ABADIK
B118 BANOSKIK
B119 BRAS D’OR
B120 OSOYOOS
B121 SHELDRAKE
B122 GARGANEY
B123 NICTAK
B124 GANNET
B125 ESKIMO
B126 CAREY
B127 DABCHICK
B128 ZUIZAN
B129 IBIS
B130 ROVEN
B131 PENGUIN
B132 GANDER
B133 M.516
B134 ALOMA/CORMACK
B135 M.515

B136 M.519
B137 BEAVER
B139 MOHAWK
B159 MALECITE
B161 MONTAGNAIS
B162 HURON
B165 ATLIN
B167 REEL FISHER
B170 SKEENA MAID
B171 MALAHAT
B172 SONGHEE
B174 STUART
B179 ARROW
B183 NAOMI W

This is a list of the RCAF Marine Craft in alphabetical order by International Call Sign:

These are all the call signs that have been found and one can find further detail on each vessel by looking up the vessel on the list of names above.

VXCB M.233 ABNAKI

VXCD M.610 BLACK GOOSE

VXCF M.611 BLUE GOOSE

VXCG M.267 BRANT

VXCJ M.614 CANADA GOOSE

VXCK M.178 DUCK

VXCL M.202 EIDER

VXCM M.612 GREY GOOSE

VXCN M.235 HURON

VXCP M.396 KINGFISHER

VXCQ M.467 MALAHAT

VXCR M.231 MALECITE

VXCS M.234 MONTAGNAIS

VXCT M.208 NOOTKA

VXCW M.264 PELICAN

VXCY M.430 PUFFIN

VXCZ M.201 REDHEAD

VXDB M.433 SNIPE

VXDC M.613 SNOW GOOSE

VXDF M.468 SONGHEE

VXDG M.232 TAKULI

VXDJ M.266 TEAL

VXNZ M.769 SNOWBIRD

VXZG M.871 MALLARD

I feel confident the VXZG call sign was assigned to this M.871 MALLARD and not M.158 MALLARD but why could I not find the call sign to the others, the 40-footers at least. I have gone through my International Telecommunication records many times with hopes they would somehow appear but they are not there.

This is a list of the RCAF Marine Craft in alphabetical order by Radiotelephone Voice Call:

These are all the radiotelephone call codes that have been found and one can find further detail on each vessel from the list of names above. One will note a number of duplicates and your guess is as good as mine. These came from the Janap List and there are five 40-footers. Therefore, this Janap List must have been issued around 1953 or 1954.

Catapult B M.467 MALAHAT

Catapult D M.611 BLUE GOOSE

Chapel A M.848 ALBATROSS

Chapel A M.266 TEAL

Chapel Z M.535 NIMPKISH

Charity W M.430 PUFFIN

Charity X M.793 AVOCET

Charity X M.159

Disband A M.847 FLAMINGO

Disband A M.396 KINGFISHER

Disband B M.610 BLACK GOOSE

Disband B M.849 GUILLEMOT

Equal S M.810 KNOT

Equal S M.613 SNOW GOOSE

Event E M.851 MANX

Event E M.234 MONTAGNAIS

Event F M.267 BRANT

Event F	M.807	RUFF
Extort F	M.231	MALECITE
Extort F	M.808	SANDPIPER
Extort G	M.364	DABCHICK
Extort G	M.850	SKUA
Fido H	M.612	GREY GOOSE
Fido H	M.809	WOODCOCK
Flashlight G	M.233	ABNAKI
Giddy U	M.208	NOOTKA
Gismo T	M.468	SONGHEE
Inlet V	M.264	PELICAN
Irium G	M.235	HURON
Irium H	M.232	TAKULI
Jigger N	M.202	EIDER
Jingle P	M.178	DUCK
Jingle Q	M.433	SNIPER
Menu M	M.614	CANADA GOOSE

This is what has been found on the RCAF fleet.

THE 40-FOOTERS

The steel 40-footers listed above were a design in use by the United States Coast Guard. The first Royal Canadian Air Force copies were built in the United States and further copies were built in Canada. I found an article in November, 2005, that said the RCAF took delivery of 4 American built copies and had 5 more copies built in Canada. Note that the first 5 on the list have pendant numbers that run consecutive.

The nine were:

RCAF	M.847	FLAMINGO	
RCAF	M.848	ALBATROSS	renamed HERON
RCAF	M.849	GUILLEMOT	
RCAF	M.850	SKUA	
RCAF	M.851	MANX	
RCAF	M.871	MALLARD	
RCAF	M.872	BLACK DUCK	
RCAF	M.873	GANNET	
RCAF	M.925	EGRET	

The Canadian Coast Guard had about twenty copies of these 40-footers as mentioned in the description of

RCAF M.850 SKUA. The Canadian built copies had so much extra equipment that the crews began to wonder if they were still seaworthy. As far as I know the Royal Canadian Mounted Police continued to use a wooden patrol boat and did not have any of these 40-footers. One would think the steel hull of these 40-footers would have made a more efficient vessel, especially on the west coast where there are a lot of partially submerged trees.



John Rae VEIAGN

This is one of the Canadian Coast Guard 40-footers. This is Canadian Coast Guard Cutter 117 at her home berth at Sambro, Nova Scotia in 1980. This one was built at Sorel, Quebec. My old friend and former shipmate Captain Ellsworth Coggins brought this one down to Halifax from her builder's yard. We were told these American boats were designed to roll over and right themselves. Captain Coggins wanted to do that with the 117 as part of her sea trials. The shipyard refused. Off Summerside, Prince Edward Island on this delivery voyage they were getting low on fuel and when entering this port she rolled over in a sea so far her main engines stopped. The engines were fitted with cutout switches to stop when the 117 rolled over to a certain degree. Her crew was in a bit of a panic to get an anchor out and get her engines going again. The 117 was a training vessel for the officer cadets at the Coast Guard College, Sydney, Nova Scotia in 2007.

There is a good photograph of one of the RCAF 40-footers, RCAF M.848 HERON on page 306 of Canadian Warship Names by David J. Freeman. Page 17 of Volume Two of The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons has four good photographs of RCAF M.872 BLACK DUCK. There was still a use for these small vessels in 2005 and they were assigned these same names. They were operated by the sea division, the current navy of the Canadian Forces and were painted all grey.

Back in the 1950's and 1960's it was hard to get in and out of an American port and not see at least one of these 40-footers. One would often come alongside and look you over from a short distance. They normally

carried a crew of two men. One was a Quartermaster third and the other a Motorman third in the United States Coast Guard known as a Petty Officer Third Class or the equivalent of a Leading Seaman in the pre 1968 Canadian Navy. The Quartermaster stood at the wheel, steered and operated the 6-71 GM Diesel Engines from that position on the starboard side. The Motorman stood on the opposite port side and had a steel bar to hang on to. I have seen them switch on a good clear loud hailer and politely ask a yacht to move out of our way. If the yacht did not move they would switch on a siren, give her a good shot of full ahead and literally kick all the water out from under their stern, and leap at the offending yacht with the motorman hanging on.

I have more detail on these U.S. Coast Guard 40-footers in Section 10 under Lifeboats.



United States Coast Guard

This is one of these 40-footers of the United States Coast Guard off the Coast of Alaska.

THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES FLEET

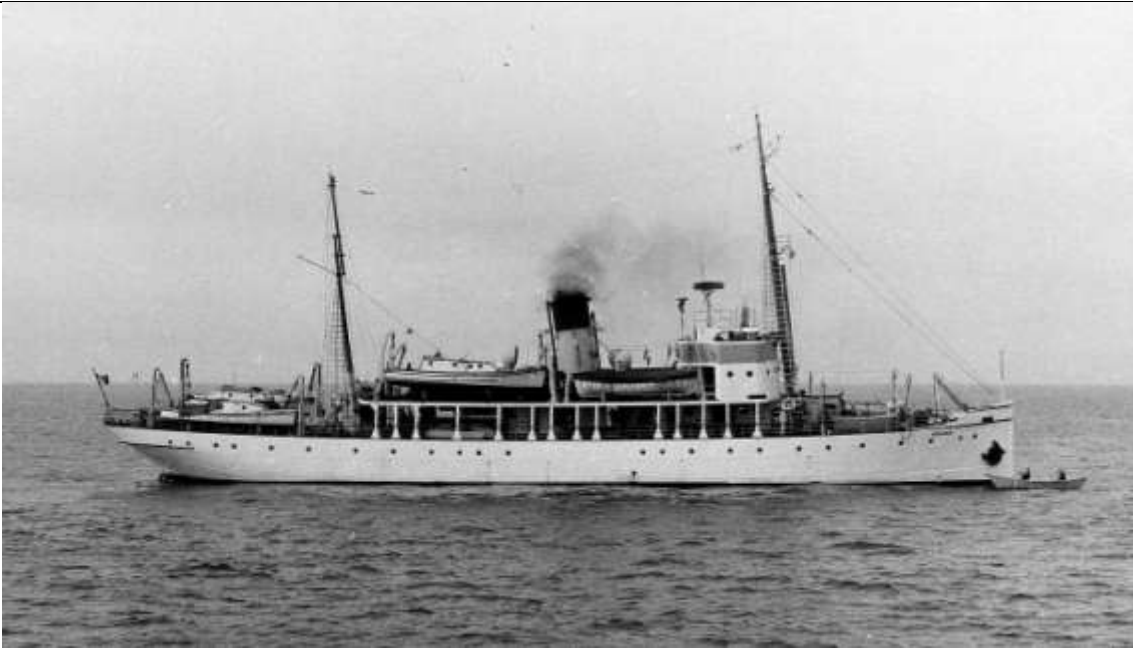
The Department of Fisheries Fleet over the years has contained a number of ships that carried radio operators. The ACADIA was part of this fleet for many years. She arrived in 1912 with call sign VDT and when all the call signs changed to four letters, hers was as descriptive as any, CGFS – Canadian Government Fisheries Service. On the creation of the Department of the Environment and the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, this call sign was changed to CGCB. Between the world wars there were three main ships around the Halifax area that operated under the Department of Fisheries. All three have been mentioned elsewhere on these pages.

CGFS

ACADIA

CGFX
CGFD

ARLEUX
ARRAS



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

CSS ACADIA

After World War II this fisheries service was given a Navy diesel Bangor Class Minesweeper, HMCS MELVILLE that was renamed CYGNUS and was assigned call sign CGFR. That CYGNUS was replaced in 1959 with a new ship named CYGNUS that did not carry a radio operator. The year before, 1958, the A. T. CAMERON joined this fleet and she carried a radio operator.



Pat Falvey

CGS CYGNUS with call sign CGFR

CGFR	CYGNUS
CGBD	A. T. CAMERON

In 1975 a new ship, CAPE ROGER, built in Pictou, Nova Scotia, joined this fleet and was capable of carrying a radio operator. She was fitted with a Marconi Commander D station and came complete with a proper call sign taken randomly from the Canadian blocks of call signs, VCBT. CAPE ROGER carried a radio operator for a couple of trips only. At least someone somewhere tried very hard to not only make sense but give this ship the very best communications available.

VCBT	CAPE ROGER
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Wamboldt-Waterfield, Halifax, Nova Scotia

CGS CAPE ROGER at Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 1977



Canadian Shipping and Marine Engineering

Another new ship built at Marystown shipyard, Marystown, Newfoundland, named CYGNUS joined this fleet in 1982 with call sign CGDW. This CYGNUS with the CGDW call sign was equipped with radiotelephone only and did not carry a radio operator.

CGDW	CYGNUS
CGDC	CYGNUS
CGDM	CHEBUCTO
CGGG	CAPE FREELS

The four above were fitted with radiotelephone only and were fisheries protection patrol vessels, although the International Telecommunication Union publication List of Ship Stations listed them as cargo vessels. They resembled a small warship without guns and were painted gray until they were combined with the Coast Guard fleet. The two that were left at that time, CYGNUS with international call sign CGDW and CHEBUCTO with international call sign CGDM were then painted Coast Guard red. All the fisheries vessels were complete gray in colour with the exception of the A. T. CAMERON. The last time I saw her she was painted in a black hull, white superstructure configuration. CAPE FREELS sank while patrolling the Grand Banks off Newfoundland.

HALIFAX RADIO VBQ

Radiotelephone technology by 1936 had advanced far enough that the Department of Transport installed a station for this mode of communication with ships in the Halifax area. This station was located at Citadel Hill in the city of Halifax and it remained at this location only five years, from 1936 until 1941 when it was moved to the upper floor of the main Post Office building in Halifax. There was also a signal station for visual communications mounted on the roof of this Post Office building that was operated by the Navy with WRENS (Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service) during the last years of World War II, and civilian signalmen after termination of the war.

This radiotelephone station was known as Halifax Radio and held call sign VBQ. The operators at this station handled radiotelephone duplex calls (direct link between ships and the regular telephone system); messages with ships fitted with only radiotelephone; a continuous radiotelegraph service between VBQ, the radio operators on Sable Island VGF, and with Ottawa Radio VAA. Another part of their duties consisted of supplying an operator for the Sambro Lightship with call sign VXR. One of the VBQ operators did this tour for a few weeks at a time. There was only this one Lightship in the approaches to Halifax after the war. During the war there had been two, another known as Halifax East that was on the eastern side of the approaches to the harbour.



Warren E. Hagar

This is Sambro Lightship No 24 in 1933 but I do not know when she was first issued the VXR call sign. There is a possibility this Lightship had call sign VGX at one time.

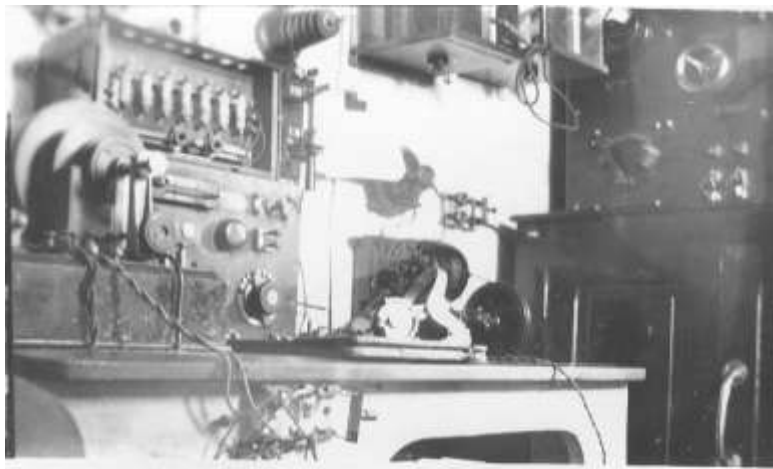


Warren E. Hagar

This is the Lurcher Lightship No 14 in 1925.

The last Lurcher Lightship was taken to the Point Edward Coast Guard College and is used as a training vessel for the Coast Guard officer cadets with call sign CGBG.

The Lurcher Lightship had call sign VGA but I do not know when she was first issued that call sign.



Warren E. Hagar

This is the radio beacon transmitter in the Lurcher Lightship 1925.



Alex Murray

This is Halifax Radio VBQ located in the old Post Office Building in downtown Halifax.
This photograph was taken in the mid 1950's

For many years VBQ operated with only one transmitter, a Collins AG10 but eventually was fitted with a second AG10. Needless to say the operators did some very fancy footwork to keep this station going with only one transmitter. Any faults had to be cleared immediately if not sooner. This is only one of many similar incidents that a service was performed with next to nothing with which to work. Along with the two Collins AG10 transmitters this station had eight receivers located at Hartlen Point. These receivers were remotely controlled from the Post Office building. In other words the duty operator and the transmitters were in the Post Office building, downtown Halifax, and the receivers were remote-controlled from Hartlen Point.

NATIONAL SEA PRODUCTS

After World War II Maritime Fish and National Fish became one company known as National Sea Products Limited. None of their ships has carried a radio operator since the war with the exception of the CAPE NORTH with call sign VODV. Jim Cable sailed as her radio operator for a short time during the 1980's. Other than that brief stint with a refrigerated freezer trawler this fleet operated entirely with radiotelephone. For many years this fleet had a daily schedule set up through Halifax Radio VBQ on frequency 2530 kHz. Mr. Phil Romkey at National Sea Products would call Halifax Radio VBQ at scheduled times during the day and the duty operator at VBQ would connect him via duplex to this channel. Mr. Romkey would then call each vessel in turn and hold a conference with each of the Captains at sea.

HALIFAX RADIO CFH AFTER WORLD WAR II

When World War II terminated, Halifax Radio CFH carried on under the same staffing arrangement as when it first went on the air in 1943. Charlie Williams was the Department of Transport Officer in Charge and the operators under him were Shirley Booth, Ernie Falvey, Fred Totten, and Frank Emeneau. The naval radiotelegraph operators did the operating with all but the passenger liners. The station was to take over the handling of commercial message traffic from all ships at 8 AM local time January 1st, 1946. The Petty Officer in charge of the watch got excited and jumped the gun starting at midnight local time. The Department of Transport operators had drawn lots to see which one would open the station. Ernie Falvey

had won the honours but arrived at 8 AM to find the station had been open to commercial message traffic for eight hours and everything was in one hell of a mess. There were messages with no origin, no checks, and no time. Names were inaccurate, call signs were missing or inaccurate, and no QRC (name of the private company handling the accounts). Needless to say Ernie put in one of the longest and toughest days of his career, but luckily Charlie Williams was most capable and he was not long getting things in order.

There were twelve top naval radio telegraph operators per watch (twenty-five words per minute steady on traffic with ordinary hand keys), but they were a different breed of operator and the large commercial ships shied away from them because of their lack of understanding commercial procedures.



Bob Palmer

The operations room Halifax Radio CFH in 1947. Clockwise from Petty Officer Jack Carson (standing), Jim McGowan, Shorty Palmerton, Bob Walker, Norm Jermy, Scotty McLaughlan, Chuck Evans and Ron Dennis.

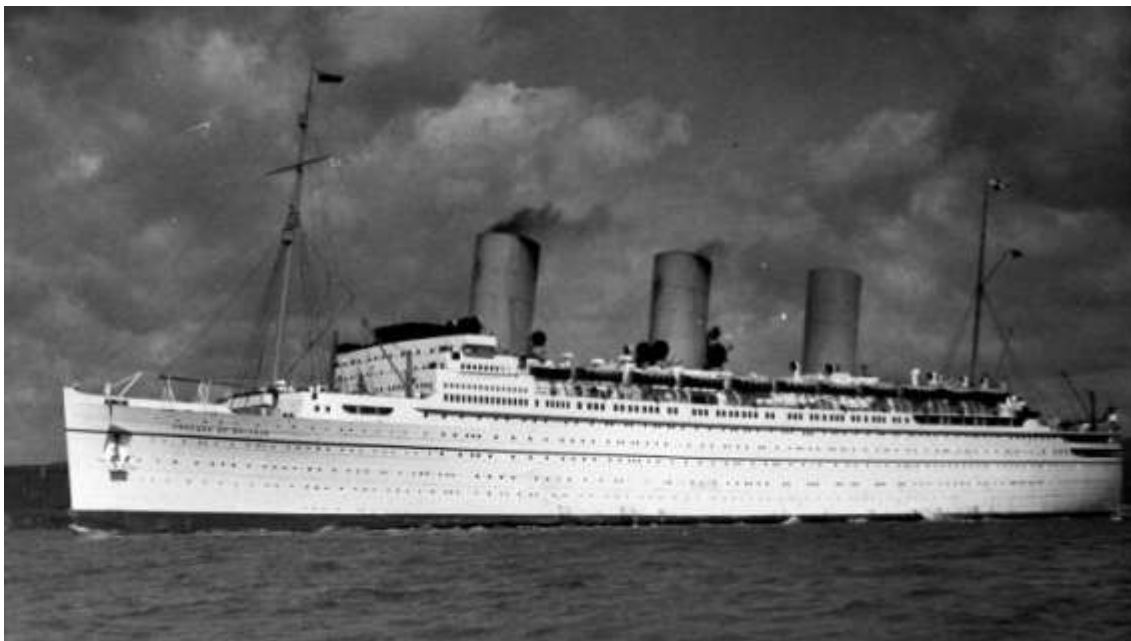
To give you an indication of what it was like to operate Halifax Radio CFH at this time, Ernie Falvey went on duty one morning at 8 AM and received the following from the QUEEN MARY with call sign GBTT. QTC264, I have 264 telegrams, QSG30, I will send 30 of these at a time. She was bound for New York

from Europe and when Shirley Booth relieved Ernie at 3:55 that afternoon, QUEEN MARY sent HVE PRESSE CK4000, news for Telephoto News London, with four thousand words in the text. Ernie transmitted QRX SEC, I will call you in a second – standby, took off the headset and looked at Shirley saying, “It’s all yours Shirl, the key is hot, the writer is hot, and the seat is hot!”. Shirley sat down and got not one, but two of these long PRESSE messages, and was busy until midnight. At this time the British Government would pay for one telegram from each war bride to her home in England, and the QUEEN MARY carried many of these brides. Ernie managed to work a vessel just leaving Port Said, Egypt and another at Auckland, New Zealand, with no trouble. CFH was using ten thousand watts on the high frequency bands at this time.



Bob Palmer

Receiver site Halifax Radio CFH, Albro Lake, Nova Scotia, 1947



Public Archives Canada PA-56542

EMPRESS OF BRITAIN

CAMPERDOWN VCS AFTER WORLD WAR II

When the war ended C. R. "Sprack" Spracklin was still Officer in Charge at Camperdown Radio VCS. The Navy turned the relatively new Port War Signal Station over to the Department of Transport. John Spears had taken sick with cancer and died in 1945 at the age of forty-five and his son Gerry having spent a good portion of his naval service in the Frigate HMCS PRESTONIAN was discharged in 1945. John Wilkie received his naval discharge and he and Gerry took over the operation of the Signal Station on December 17th, 1945. A few years after this, Bill Spears (Gerry's brother), and Ross Purcell joined Gerry and John Wilkie as signalmen.

A number of changes were made in the two Camperdown stations (radio and signal) and by the early fifties, the signal station contained messing accommodations, the main radar set, and a low power radiotelephone for communications with the lighthouses in the vicinity and with the Halifax Pilot Boat. Staff of the Signal Station used the radiotelephone, but the radar was controlled from Camperdown Radio VCS.

Camperdown Radio VCS contained the main transmitter, a type LCS5 that had a one-kilowatt output, backed up by a Marconi LTT4 for emergency use. A Marconi TM11 was for use with ships fitted with radiotelephone only. The TM11 was the shore or coast station version of the popular CM11; simply a CM11 minus the CSR5 receiver. One 268 radar and two cathode ray type direction finders were also at the station and operated by the duty operators. One of these operated on the usual radiotelegraph direction finding frequencies of 300 to 500 kHz. The other operated on the radiotelephone frequencies of the 2-megahertz band. There was also an aural type MDF4 direction finder. The medium frequency direction finders could be connected to either Bellini-Tosi loops or to an Adcock Array, while the two megahertz apparatus had its own set of Adcock aerals.

A remote receiver on the calling and distress frequency of 500 kHz provided a continuous standby watch on the ship distress frequency. There were both landline telegraph and telephone wire line connections, including direct communications to the Halifax Pilot Office. The operators at the station still used radiotelegraph and the landline telegraph codes, the continental code for the former and the American, or Morse code for the latter. The normal procedure was to use a regular hand key for the radiotelegraph and a semi-automatic key (Bug) on the landline telegraph. The landline telegraph was a faster code.

The radar and direction finding at Camperdown VCS together with the low power radiotelephone worked as a team. This permitted the pilot boat and incoming vessels to find each other during periods of low visibility and permitted the operators to follow their progress into the harbour. Radar would give the bearing and range of the target (ship), but no identification. The direction finder gave identification and bearing, but not the range. Using the two together provided full information and also checked the accuracy of the separate methods with respect to the bearing.

During the 1940's radiotelephone traffic increased considerably. The large fishing vessels had replaced their radio operators with radiotelephone and small vessels of all types started installing these units. Radiotelephone was much improved with all the newer technology of the war and it was soon apparent that the services of the signal station were no longer required. Therefore, on March 17th, 1953 for the first time after more than 150 years of continuous service to the port of Halifax, the Camperdown Signal Station closed and the four Signalmen transferred to other employment elsewhere.



Alex Murray

This is radio operator Stan Cairns operating the first Teletype that replaced the old landline Morse system to CN/CP and Western Union. August 1956



Alex Murray

Operating position Camperdown Radio VCS mid 1950's



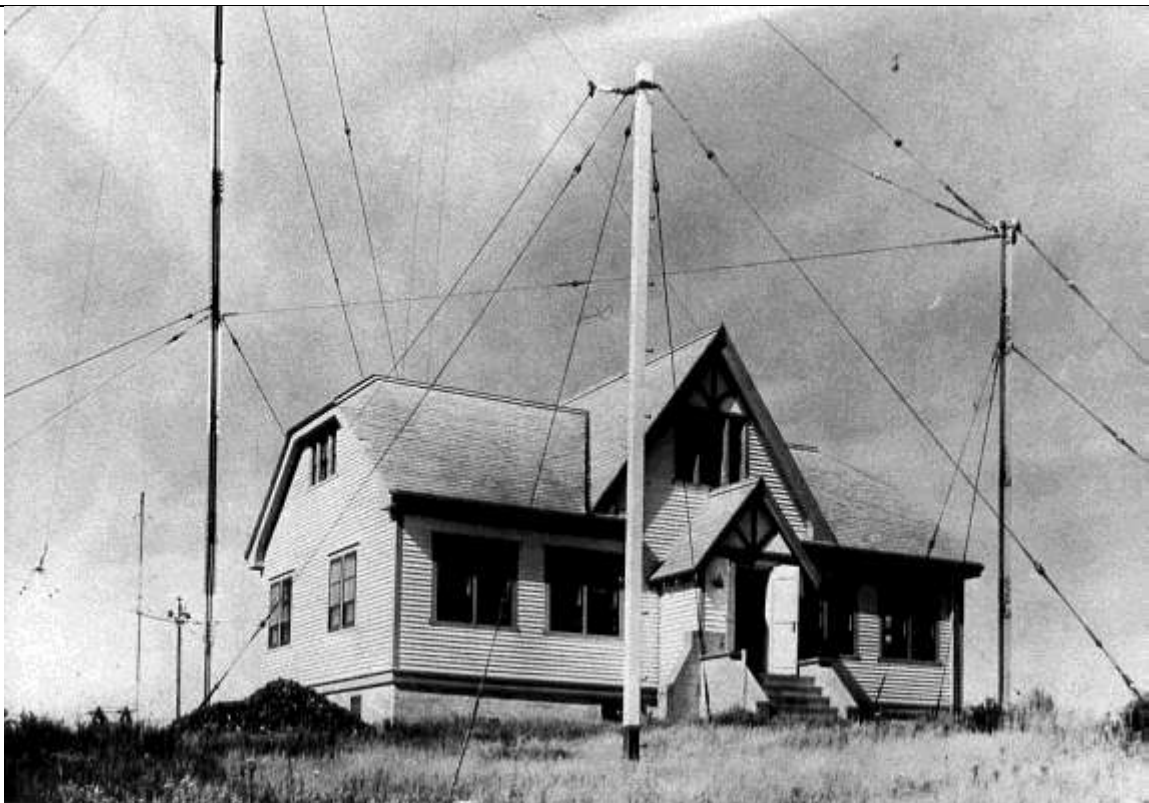
Alex Murray

Dave Clarkson at radar plotting position Camperdown Radio VCS 1956



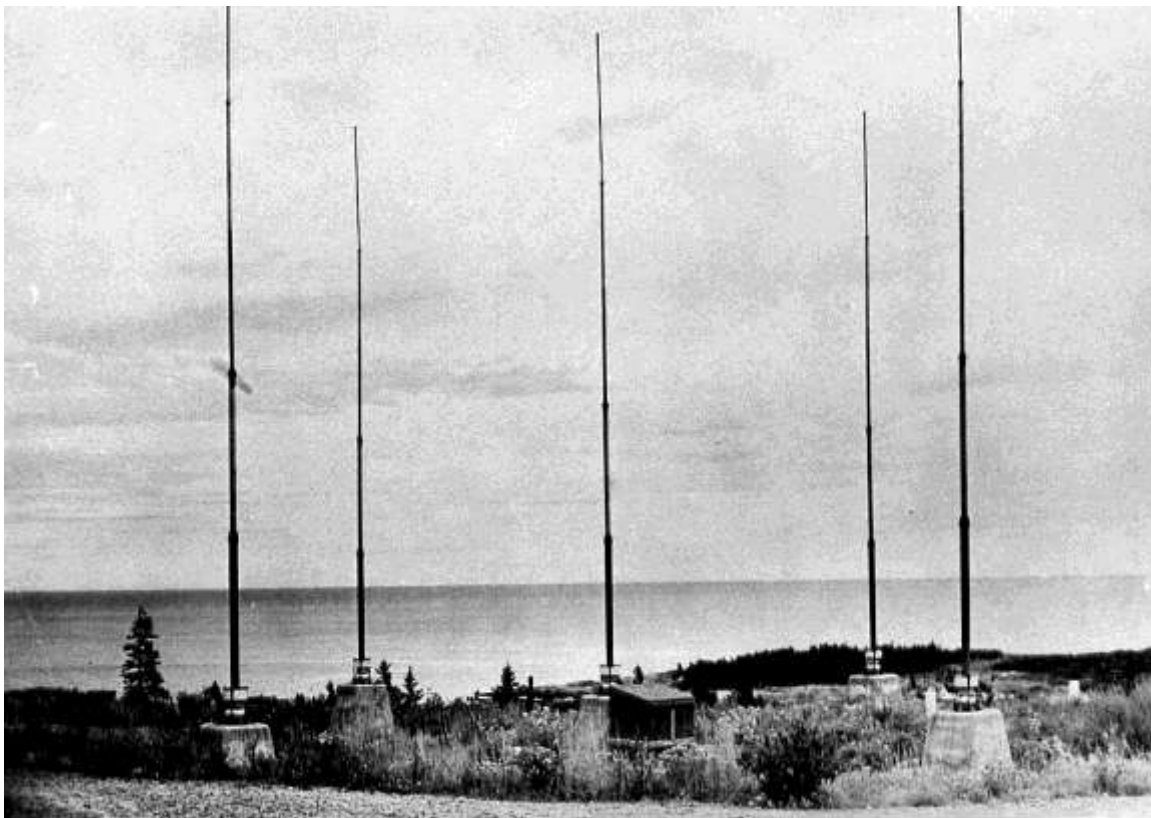
Alex Murray

John Weir operating Camperdown Radio VCS 1956



National Research Council (2360D)

Operations Building Camperdown Radio VCS September 1949



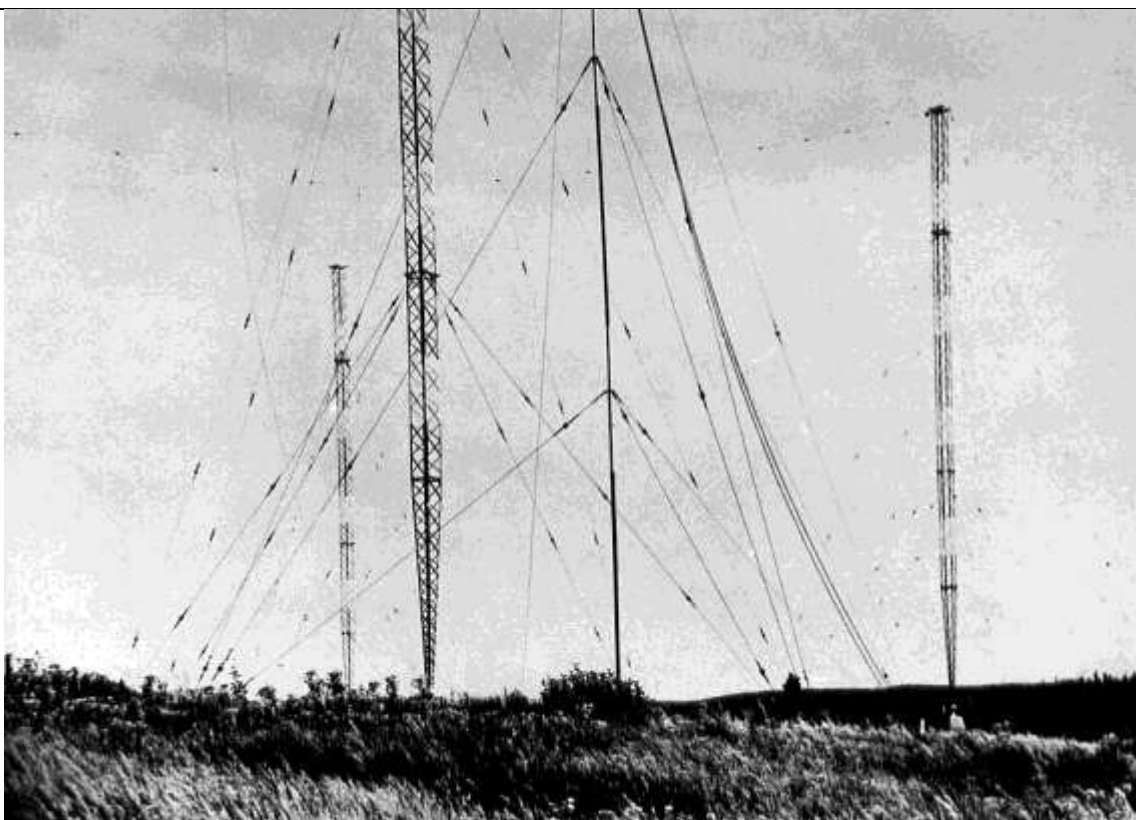
National Research Council (2360F)

Adcock D/F Antenna Array for the Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) Direction Finder, Camperdown Radio VCS
September 1949



National Research Council (2360A)

Port War Signal Station Camperdown, September 1949



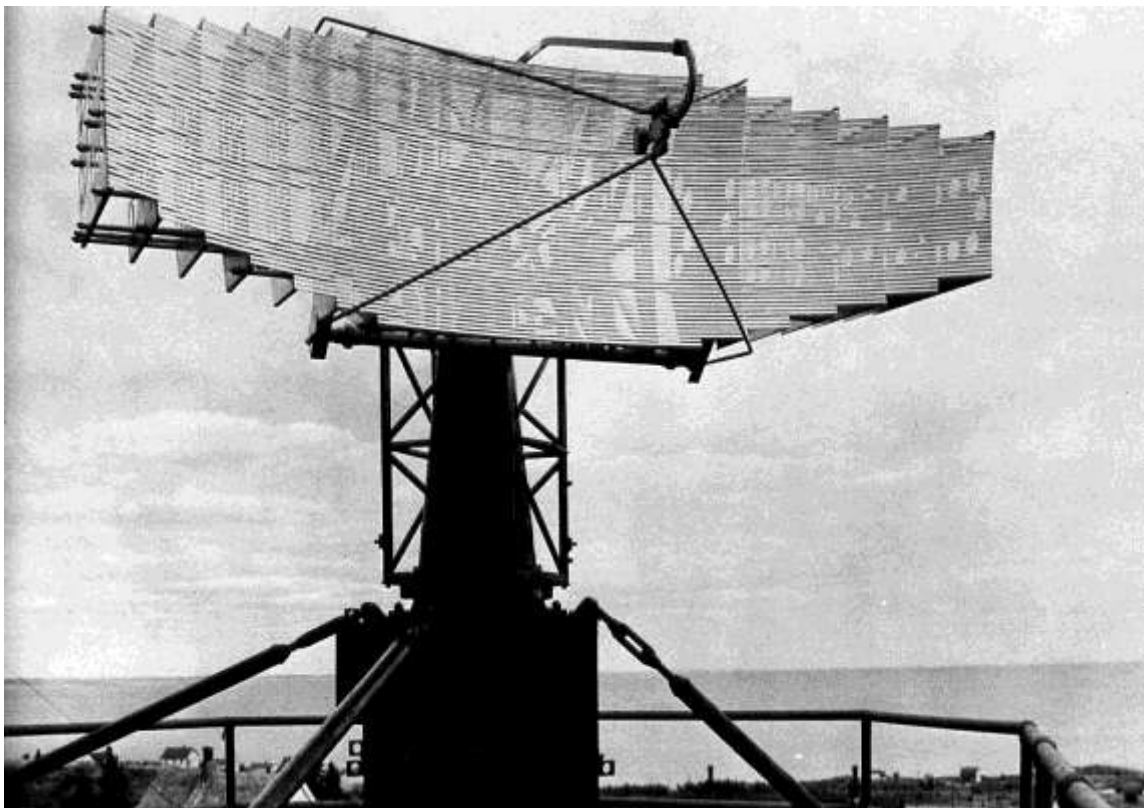
National Research Council (2360G)

Antenna Farm Camperdown Radio VCS September 1949



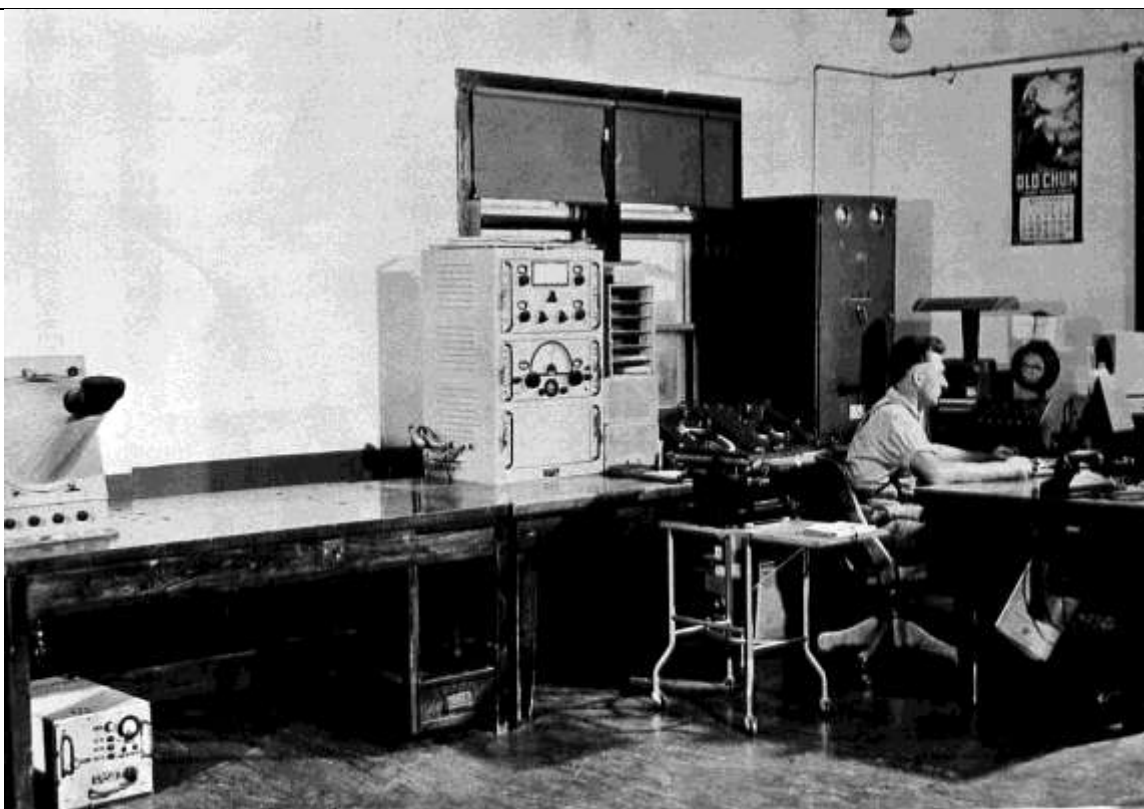
National Research Council (2360C)

Radar operating position Camperdown Radio September 1949



National Research Council (2360B)

Radar antenna Camperdown September 1949



National Research Council (2360E)

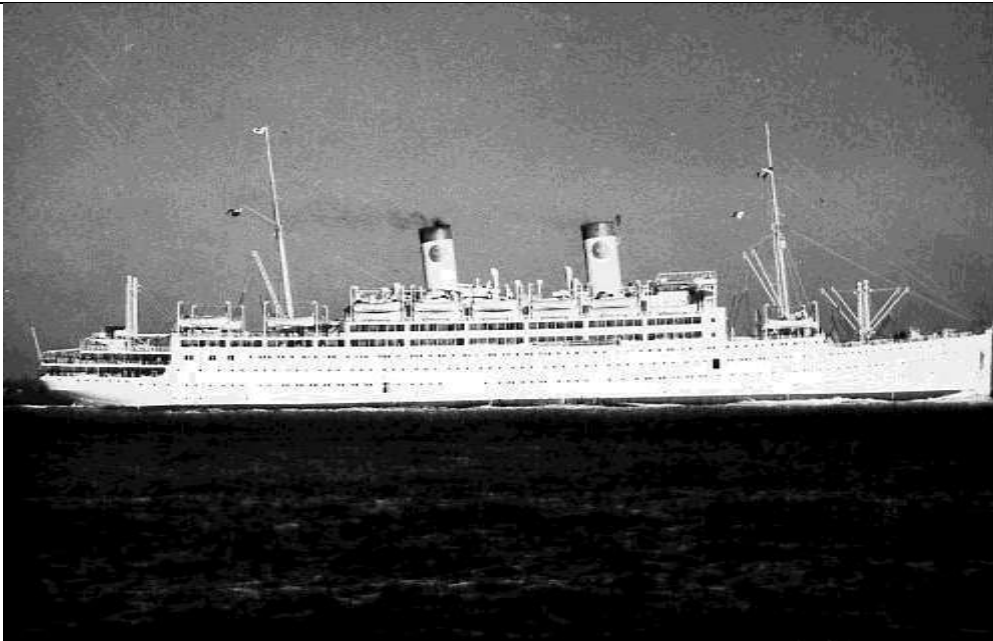
Ernie Falvey operating Camperdown Radio VCS September 1949

ITALIA HOJQ

On a Sunday morning in 1952 Ernie Falvey was doing the radar watch and John Weir was the duty radio operator at Camperdown Radio VCS. This particular morning the weather was thick fog with the visibility down to a few hundred feet. Camperdown had a large chart mounted on a pedestal alongside the 268 radar and the operators of the radar watch were required to plot on this chart the correct position of any ship; leaving, entering, or about to enter Halifax Harbour. This was done as soon as any ship showed on the radar screen and every fifteen minutes thereafter.

Ernie Falvey placed the Panamanian ship SS ITALIA belonging to the Home Line, and holding call sign HOJQ, on this chart at 11 AM on this Sunday in 1952. (I was unable to locate the exact date.) At this time ITALIA was approaching at ninety-five degrees heading for the outer automatic buoy. According to regulations Ernie did not have to plot this position again until 11:15 AM, so he got up out of his chair, looked out at the lousy weather and started to walk towards the operating position. John Weir left his position and started walking towards Ernie and when they met in front of the radar, John jokingly threw a punch at Ernie and said something to the effect get out of my way you old so and so. Ernie was around twelve years older than John and when Ernie ducked John's punch he happened to glance in the radar and received quite a shock at 11:07 AM. There was the ITALIA showing up like a large hot dog on the screen. ITALIA had mistaken the black can shoal buoy for the outer automatic. The black can shoal buoy is to the northeast of the outer automatic. Over this shoal there is only eighteen feet of water and the ITALIA was drawing thirty-one feet. ITALIA with fifteen hundred passengers on board was heading straight for disaster.

Ernie yelled at John to tell the ITALIA she was standing in danger and grabbed the radiotelephone to the pilot boat. Captain Harris Mosher (Ernie's brother-in-law) was in the pilot boat on the way out to meet ITALIA and act as her pilot for entering Halifax.



World Ship Society

ITALIA

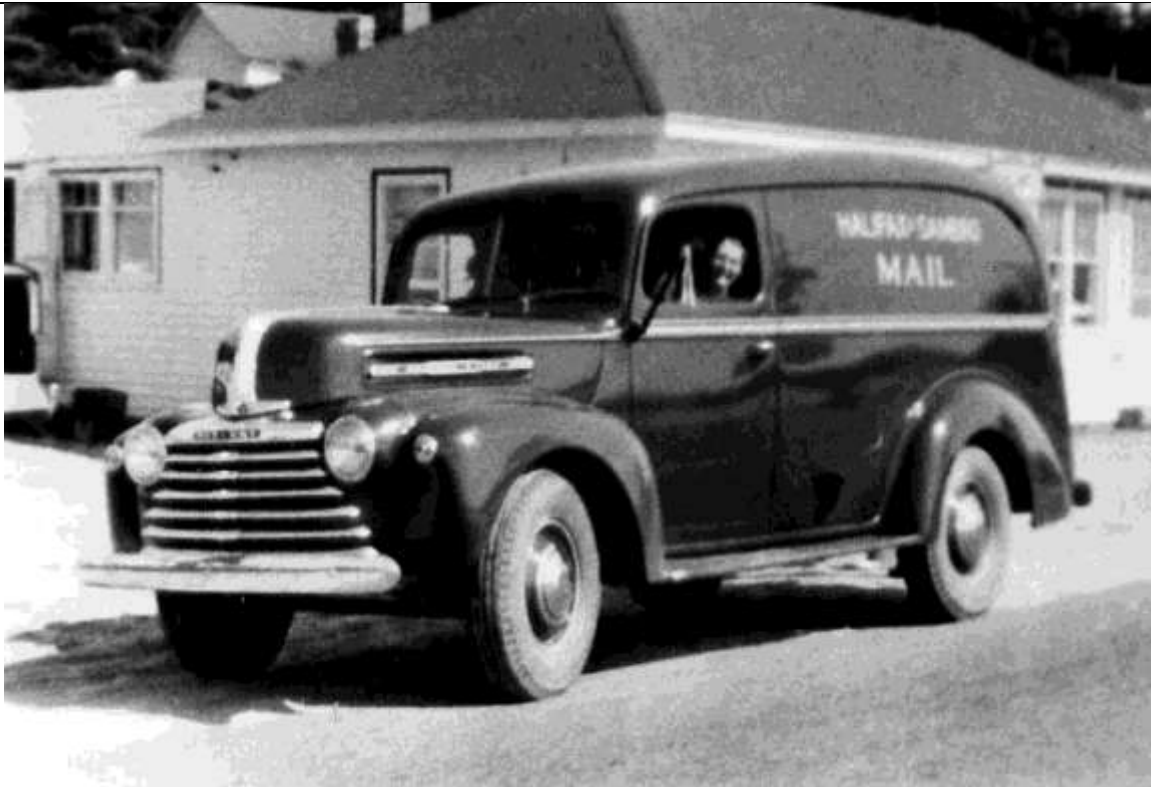
It is not known how John notified ITALIA. All he had to do was transmit in radiotelegraph on 500 kHz the call sign HOJQ a couple of times, DE the separation or From Signal once. VCS a couple of times and then

the letter U; preceded by QTQ if felt necessary. The duty Radio Officer in HOJQ should have recognized the letter U only. QTQ from the international Q Code meant I am using the International Code of Signals, U from the International Code of Signals meant you are running into danger.

Whether ITALIA actually heard John or Ernie call the pilot boat is not clear, but she did realize she was heading the wrong way. When she first realized this, you can almost feel the panic develop on her bridge as they madly rang for full speed astern with everything the engine room could give them. With the clanging of telegraph bells in the engine room, the duty engineers would be madly yelling at each other while they shifted to reverse and pushed the throttles to the limits. But all was not wasted, due to Ernie's quick action ITALIA managed to get herself stopped and out of danger. Captain Mosher told Ernie that when he swung aboard the ITALIA the First Officer had to do all the talking because the Captain had been scared to the point he was still speechless. Several days after this Ernie and John received a letter from Ottawa congratulating them on their prompt action, but no one now has a record of this letter. No one could provide the exact date of this incident.

DICK NICKERSON MAILMAN PAR EXCELLENT

Dick Nickerson was one person who made life more pleasant for many years at Camperdown Radio. He was the mail courier from 1929 until 1967 and not only served the station, but the villages of Ketch Harbour, Portuguese Cove, and Sambro, all those living along the road from Halifax to Sambro. Dick was the errand boy for all those places, taking and delivering orders of all descriptions including drug prescriptions. He was truly a legend especially when one realizes the fact that Dick could neither read nor write and had as much as a three ton truck at one time in order to haul it all by memory alone. Dick wore out thirteen new trucks and one used one without an accident during this thirty-eight year period.



Gordon Nickerson

Mrs. Dick Nickerson in one of her husband's vehicles

THE GYPSUM FLEET

The Canadian ships described thus far were only some of the ships flying the Canadian flag, and were a very small portion of the total number of ships that communicated through these radio stations over the years. The overall majority of the ships that communicated with these radio stations were those of other countries. The large seafaring nations of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Denmark, United States, Spain, Finland, Japan, France, Russia or Soviet Union, Norway, and so on, around the world. There are a few other fleets that should be mentioned at least and one in particular is a very old fleet that has been in continuous service around this area.

The Gypsum Fleet, or Gypsum Boats, as the residents of western Nova Scotia affectionately call them, is a very old fleet going back to the days of sail. Gypsum ore is a very important export commodity for the province and has been for many years. Three of the biggest exports of this province have been lumber, fish and gypsum, or as it has often been called plaster rock. The first sailing ships in this trade were built from the native wood and in the numerous shipyards around the coast. Gypsum has been shipped from this province to the United States for years. A hundred years and more ago the most popular vehicle to transport this cargo was a schooner, ones with three and four masts. Heavy built schooners capable of lying in the mud alongside the docks of the Bay of Fundy without water when the tide was out while they were loaded with the heavy rock (gypsum ore) cargo. The Bay of Fundy has the highest rise and fall of tide in the world and every wharf, dock, pier and so on is dry at low tide. These ships had various names and owners for many years. The first of these ships with the GYPSUM prefix in the name was the first GYPSUM KING built in 1890. The name was created from the ore cargo and the family that had a big interest in this enterprise known as the J. B. King and Company. King's wharf at Staten Island in New York Harbor was a big discharge port for these cargoes.

There were six of these large schooners built around the same time and all six were built in Nova Scotia. The six with their gross tonnage, signal letters, year built/time in service, name, where they were built and port of registry are as follows:

640	----	1890-1906	GYPSUM KING	Parrsboro, N.S.	Parrsboro, N.S.
641	TCNJ	1891-1915	GYPSUM QUEEN	Parrsboro, N.S.	Parrsboro, N.S.
664	----	1892-1898	GYPSUM PRINCESS	Parrsboro, N.S.	Windsor, N.S.
723	----	1892-1895	GYPSUM PRINCE	Hantsport, N.S.	Windsor, N.S.
723	----	1892-1917	GYPSUM EMPRESS	Horton, N.S.	Windsor, N.S.
724	WDMQ	1892-1913	GYPSUM EMPEROR	Parrsboro, N.S.	Windsor, N.S.

Three, the EMPRESS, EMPEROR and PRINCE had four masts and the other three had three masts. The only signal letters I have found for these six are the two listed.



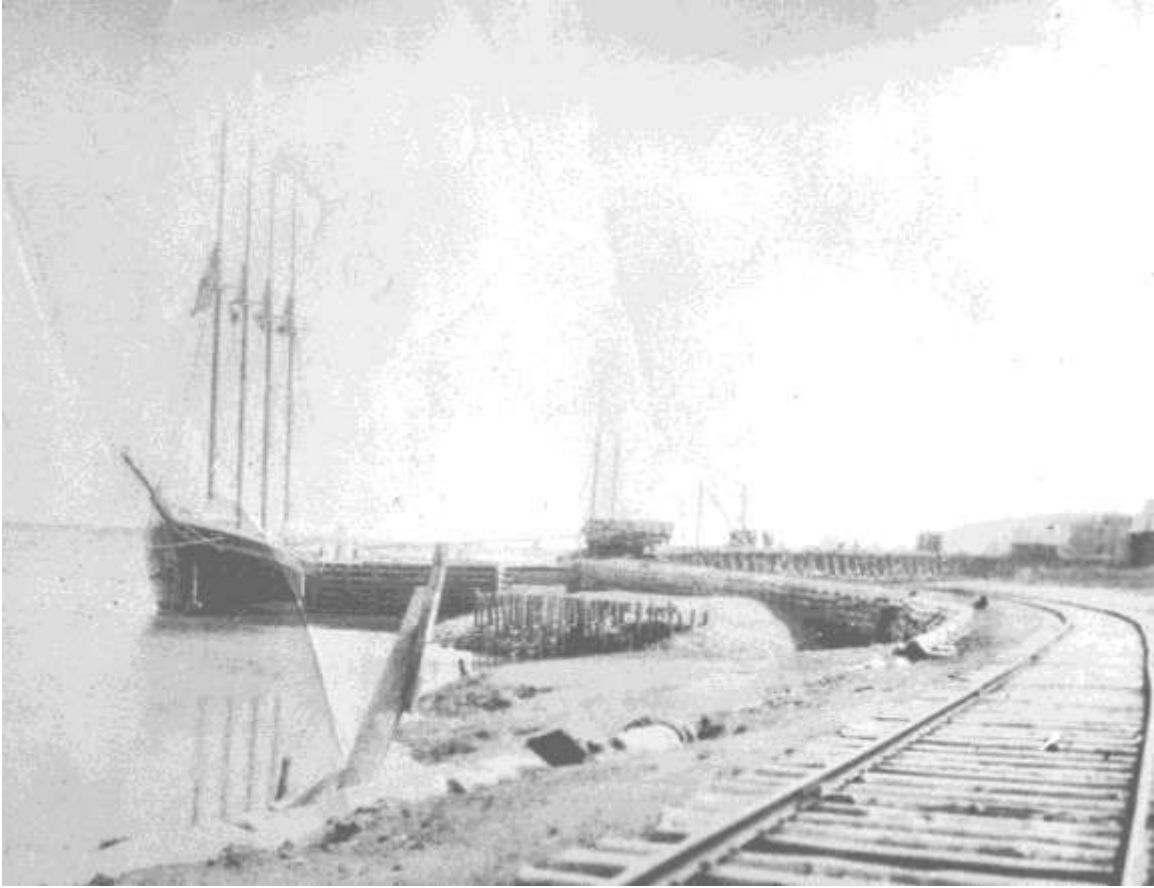
Captain O. K. Langdon

GYPSUM EMPEROR



Captain O. K. Langdon

The first GYPSUM QUEEN



Captain O.K. Langdon

This is a four master believed to be one of the gypsum fleet.

The company that owned these ships over the years was either a branch of the United States Gypsum Company in the United States or on charter to this company. Two of these companies have been the Gypsum Packet Company Limited and Gypsum Transportation Limited. This company has always chartered extra ships when required and has also sent the gypsum ships on charter with various cargoes over the years.

The gypsum ore was shipped by barge on termination of the schooners. Small tugs based at Hantsport, Nova Scotia towed the barges out to around Spencer's Island, Nova Scotia and left the barges there at anchor to be collected by larger sea going tugs. The larger sea going tugs towed the barges on to the various ports in the United States. The barges were former sailing vessels that had been converted to a barge for this purpose and most were converted in the Hantsport area. Some of the tugs carried on the Gypsum names. One was GYPSUM KING and another was GYPSUM QUEEN. As far as I know these tugs were not fitted with radio.



Captain O. K. Langdon

This is the sailing vessel MONROE under conversion to a barge at Hantsport, Nova Scotia.

This GYPSUM KING, the sea going tug, was built at Port Richmond, New York, in 1899. She struck St. Mary Ledge off Grand Manan, New Brunswick, on January 22nd, 1906, and was lost. Her crew of 12 men rowed ashore to Seal Cove, Grand Manan. In 1968 local divers dove down to the wreck and salvaged some interesting artifacts that are held at the Grand Manan Museum. It is rather odd that the sailing vessel GYPSUM KING and the tug GYPSUM KING were in service at the same time. And both terminated their service the same year, 1906.



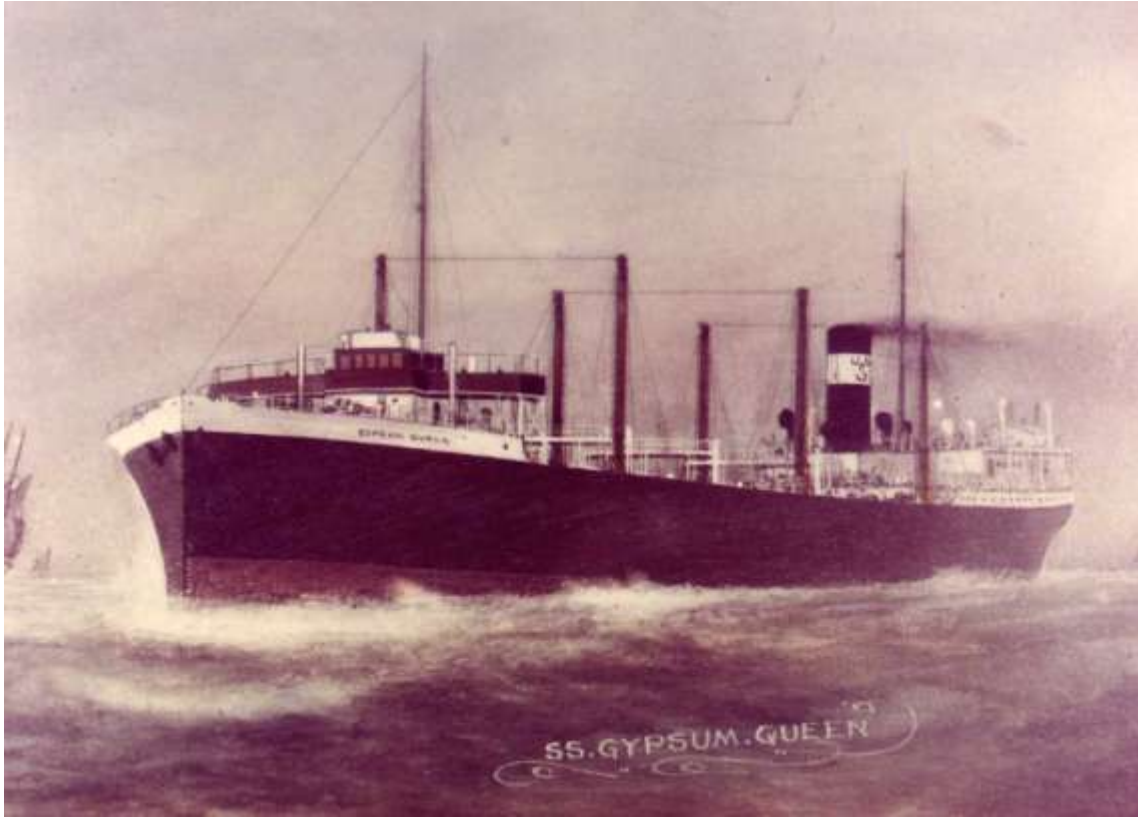
Captain O. K. Langdon
This is the tug GYPSUM KING towing an unknown schooner.

This GYPSUM QUEEN, the sea going tug, was built in 1890 and was acquired by the United States Navy in September 1917. She was commissioned SP-430 at New York City on December 4th, 1917, and was outfitted as a naval minesweeper and towing vessel. She was sent over and served in France until April 28th, 1919. She struck a rock near Armen Lighthouse off Brest on that date and sank with the loss of 2 officers and 13 men. This vessel was probably fitted with radio when it transferred to naval service.

The tugs and barges terminated their service in the late 1920's. In 1927 this gypsum fleet was renewed by three steel steamers of 3915 gross registered tons. This new fleet was registered in the United Kingdom. These three ships carried radio operators (standard spark stations of the period), and were joined by a fourth ship of much the same size (4034 gross registered tons) in 1929.

Furness Shipbuilding at Haverton Hill in the United Kingdom built all four of these gypsum ships. They were launched prior to the wireless and the visual signal call sign becoming one and the same. GYPSUM EMPRESS was the ship that joined the fleet in 1929 and I was unable to find her flag signal call sign. Since her wireless call sign does not run consecutively with the other three, she probably was assigned this combined call sign when launched in 1929. I was unable to locate the wireless call signs in use with the flag signal call signs. The four ships were:

	Flag	Radio	Name
1927-1962	LBEJ	GNCK	GYPSUM KING
1927-1941	LBCQ	GNCL	GYPSUM QUEEN
1927-1942	LBGK	GNCM	GYPSUM PRINCE
1929-1942	----	GSYM	GYPSUM EMPRESS



Captain O. K. Langdon

A painting of SS GYPSUM QUEEN with call sign GNCL

This fleet nearly died during World War II, in fact GYPSUM KING was the only one to survive, she went on to give faithful service until 1962 when she was sold to Greek interests. These Greek owners loaded her with scrap steel in the United States and then sailed her to Europe selling the whole thing, ship and cargo, for scrap. While she made this trip she was named GYPSY KING for convenience in repainting the name on the ship. The other three were not so fortunate.



Captain Oscar K. Langdon

This is the SS GYPSUM KING with call sign GNCK

GYPSUM QUEEN was a part of Convoy SC42, and was sunk by a submarine torpedo at 2119 hours (9:19-PM) on September 10th, 1941, off Greenland in position 6305N 3750W.

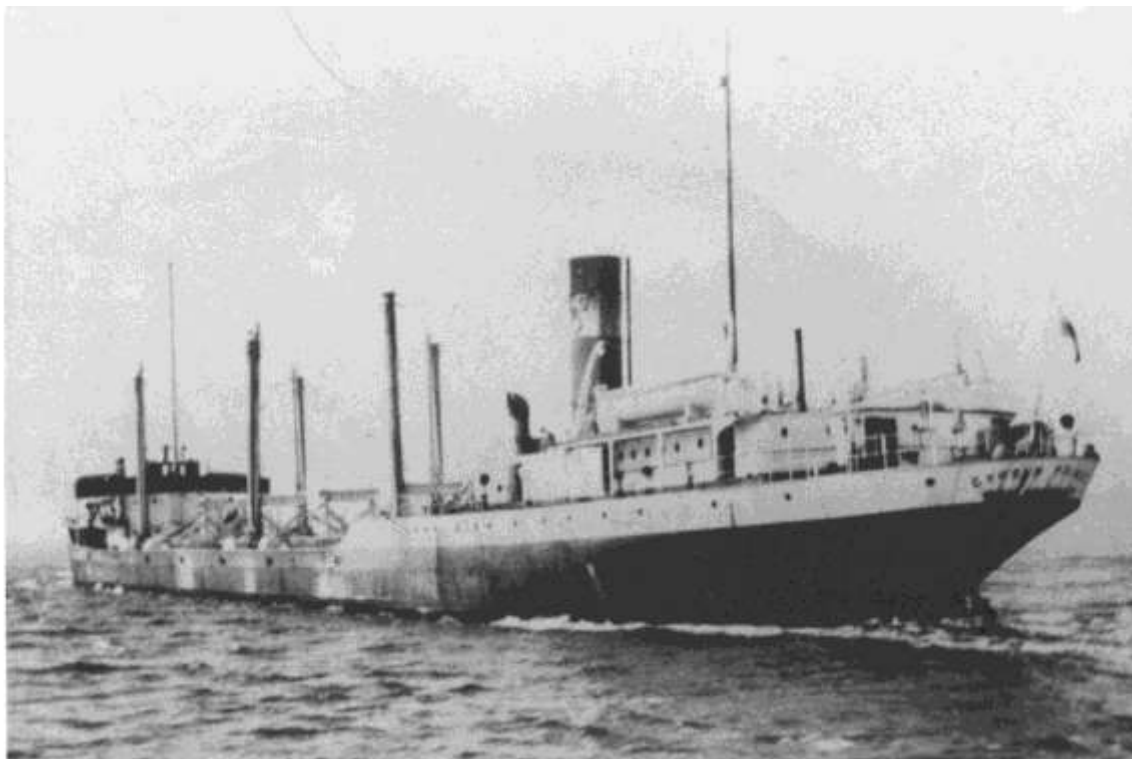


Captain Oscar K. Langdon

This is the SS GYPSUM QUEEN with call sign GNCL

On November 3rd, 1942, GYPSUM EMPRESS sank from a submarine torpedo. This was in the Caribbean Sea at position 1227N 6404W.

GYPSUM PRINCE was in collision with the British ship VOCO at the entrance to Delaware Bay on March 4th, 1942 and sank. VOCO sailed back to Philadelphia. Six crewmembers in GYPSUM PRINCE were lost. One was her Radio Officer Robert Parsons from Saint John, New Brunswick. He was 26 years old and had signed on GYPSUM PRINCE for the regular wage, \$125.00 per month. He worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation at Saint John and made this trip simply to acquire sea time for his certificate. We required a certain amount of sea time in order to keep our certificates valid. We needed six months every five years at the end of these certificates, and this may or may not have been the ruling in 1942.



Captain Oscar K. Landon

This is the SS GYPSUM PRINCE with call sign GNCM

Prior to 1947 the Gypsum Company shipped the ore from the Bay of Fundy through the port of Wentworth Creek east of the town of Windsor on the St. Croix River. Tugs took the ships up on a rising tide and would arrive at high water. The ship would load and leave on the next high water. On occasion they would leave one ship on a sandbar while another was loaded and taken out.



Captain O. K. Landon

This is the first tug named OTIS WHACK and named for one of the company managers.

The tugs name appears to be WACK in this photograph.



Captain O.K. Langdon

These are two more of the hard working tugs at Wentworth Creek.
The CHESTER is on the left and the J. A. MUMFORD on the right.

This Gypsum Company also had a loading dock at Deep Brook on the Annapolis Basin for use during the ice season. The St. Croix River fills with ice during the winter and the ore was then shipped by railroad to Deep Brook. In 1947 a large wooden dock was built at Hantsport to load these ships and this dock replaced Wentworth Creek and Deep Brook. The large storage shed at Deep Brook could still be seen from the main highway for many years after it was last used.



Captain Oscar Langdon

This is the SS JAMES SHERRIDEN.
The SS JAMES SHERRIDEN lifted the first cargo from the new Hantsport dock in April, 1947.



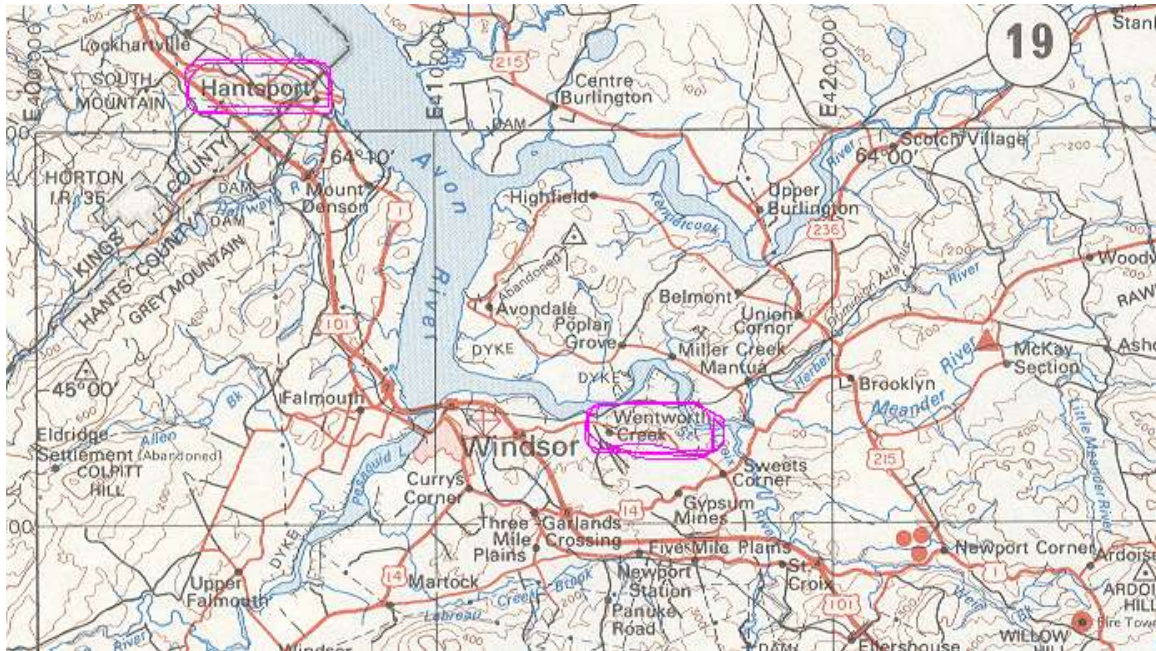
This shows the location of the two ports of Wentworth Creek and Deep Brook, Nova Scotia.

Quite often one will read that the gypsum fleet loaded at Walton. That was the National Gypsum fleet and not this, the United States Gypsum fleet. National Gypsum loaded a couple of former 4700 ton Park ships at Walton. Deep Brook is much farther west and does not appear on the following two maps.



Rand McNally

This is the Minas Channel and Minas Basin area of Nova Scotia. I have marked the ports and anchorage that I have tried to describe. Spencers Island is the little island shown just below the village of the same name. This is where the tugs apparently dropped the barges of ore for the large tugs from the United States. Wentworth Creek is not shown on this map and is shown on the one below.



Government of Canada Province of Nova Scotia



Captain Oscar K. Langdon

This is an unknown vessel loaded with a cargo from Wentworth Creek, Nova Scotia

After World War II the GYPSUM KING was returned to the Gypsum interests. This company set about immediately to replace those ships lost during the war by two new larger self-discharging ships of 7969 gross tons. Several companies have copied these two new ships. National Gypsum, Georgia Pacific and Reynolds Aluminum are three. These three altered the actual design but the basic principal has remained the same.

The Gypsum Company, the branch of United States Gypsum, decided to try this new flag of convenience that was popular and a carryover from the lend-lease agreements made between the United States and the

United Kingdom during the war. Although flag of convenience was nothing new to Canadian ship owners, many of the tern schooners had been registered in the West Indies as early as the late 1800's because of the attitude toward shipping in Canada.

These two new Gypsum ships were built at Kearney, New Jersey, in 1947 and were registered in Panama. In 1956 these two were joined by two more from the same plans, slightly altered for hydraulic hatches and a bit more streamlined. These two, GYPSUM EMPRESS and GYPSUM DUCHESS, were built at Hamburg, Germany. These four ships were fitted with the Radio Corporation of America stations, the popular consoles constructed for merchant ships in 1947 and 1956 respectively. A fifth ship, GYPSUM COUNTESS, joined the fleet at the time the GYPSUM KING was sold for scrap from the same plans as the other four. GYPSUM COUNTESS was built at La Trait, France, in 1961 and was fitted with a Mackay MRU19/20 console. The fleet between the years 1947 and December 1961 was:

1927-1962	GNCK	3915	GYPSUM KING
1947-1975	HPVU	7969	GYPSUM PRINCE
1947-1975	HPVT	7969	GYPSUM QUEEN
1956-1985	HOCZ	8180	GYPSUM EMPRESS
1956-1986	HOMS	8180	GYPSUM DUCHESS
1961-1989	HOVC	8240	GYPSUM COUNTESS
1950-1995	VDJT	237	OTIS WHACK



Radio Officer Dermot Cruise

SS GYPSUM PRINCE in the late 1940's with call sign HPVU

This OTIS WHACK was a tugboat built in 1950 at Lauzon, Quebec, and was based at Hantsport, Nova Scotia, the main loading port for these ships. This tug was the second tug of that name and named for the local company manager for many years. The tug's main excuse for existence was to tow one of the ships out to deep water if it broke down. These ships were loaded with 10,500 tons of ore in less than three hours. This was done with two fast conveyor belts. Should something have gone wrong and they were unable to load this ore, the ship left the dock on the same tide she arrived and went to anchor off Cape Blomidon in Minas Basin to wait for the next tide.



Rand McNally

This is the anchorage area for the Gypsum Fleet in the Minas Basin.

We often anchored there to wait for the tide at Hantsport or wait for a ship already loading at Hantsport to leave. This is still the practice for the present Gypsum Fleet.

The company tug OTIS WHACK lived a life of leisure for a tugboat. Her crew had her “tiddled up” like a yacht and left Hantsport on the tide before a ship was due, taking out the mail for the crew. Then she followed the ship in, providing she felt rather ambitious that day. If not she would throw a line on the ship and have her tow her in, dangling alongside. She did not, to my knowledge, tow one of the ships out.

One time GYPSUM DUCHESS got caught and had to lie in the mud for the next tide. This was the thing OTIS WHACK was supposed to prevent, but somehow the engineers did not get her water ballast out in time and the fast loading of the cargo pushed her into the mud. By the time things were organized the tide had dropped far enough that GYPSUM DUCHESS could not free herself from the mud and get clear. Luckily it did no damage. The dock is completely free of water at low tide and there is nothing but the mud of the Avon River bottom for some miles from the dock.

OTIS WHACK was fitted with radiotelephone only. Davie Shipbuilding at Lauzon, Quebec constructed OTIS WHACK and built several similar tugs at the same time. One was kept busy hauling barges of pulpwood from the West Indies to Jacksonville, Florida, under the Liberian flag. Another was based at Saint John, New Brunswick.

OTIS WHACK was registered at Windsor, Nova Scotia. The most difficult job she had was to push the

stern of one of the ships in or tow it out from the dock while entering or leaving Hantsport. This OTIS WHACK was replaced by a new tug in 1995. This tug was named SPANISH MIST and does the same job as OTIS WHACK. The naming of the Gypsum fleet is getting a bit odd to say the least. The only Spanish mist around the Avon River is in someone's imagination. The SPANISH MIST has call sign CFD7792, at least in 2004. That is likely to change the next time her radio licence is renewed.

By 1961 the Gypsum Company had enough of the Panamanian flag and since all had been going well with GYPSUM KING registered in Middlesborough, United Kingdom, they decided to switch the other five ships to the same flag and register them in London, United Kingdom. The five changed became:

GHYX	GYPSUM PRINCE
GHYY	GYPSUM QUEEN
GHZE	GYPSUM DUCHESS
GHZF	GYPSUM EMPRESS
GHZK	GYPSUM COUNTESS



Captain O. K. Langdon

This is the SS GYPSUM QUEEN with call sign GHYY.

I remember the day this was taken because I was the radio officer on board at the time this photograph was taken from a sister ship.



Fairclough Photography

This is SS GYPSUM EMPRESS with call sign GHZF docking at Hantsport, Nova Scotia.
Her water ballast is nearly out and she will soon open her cargo hatches.

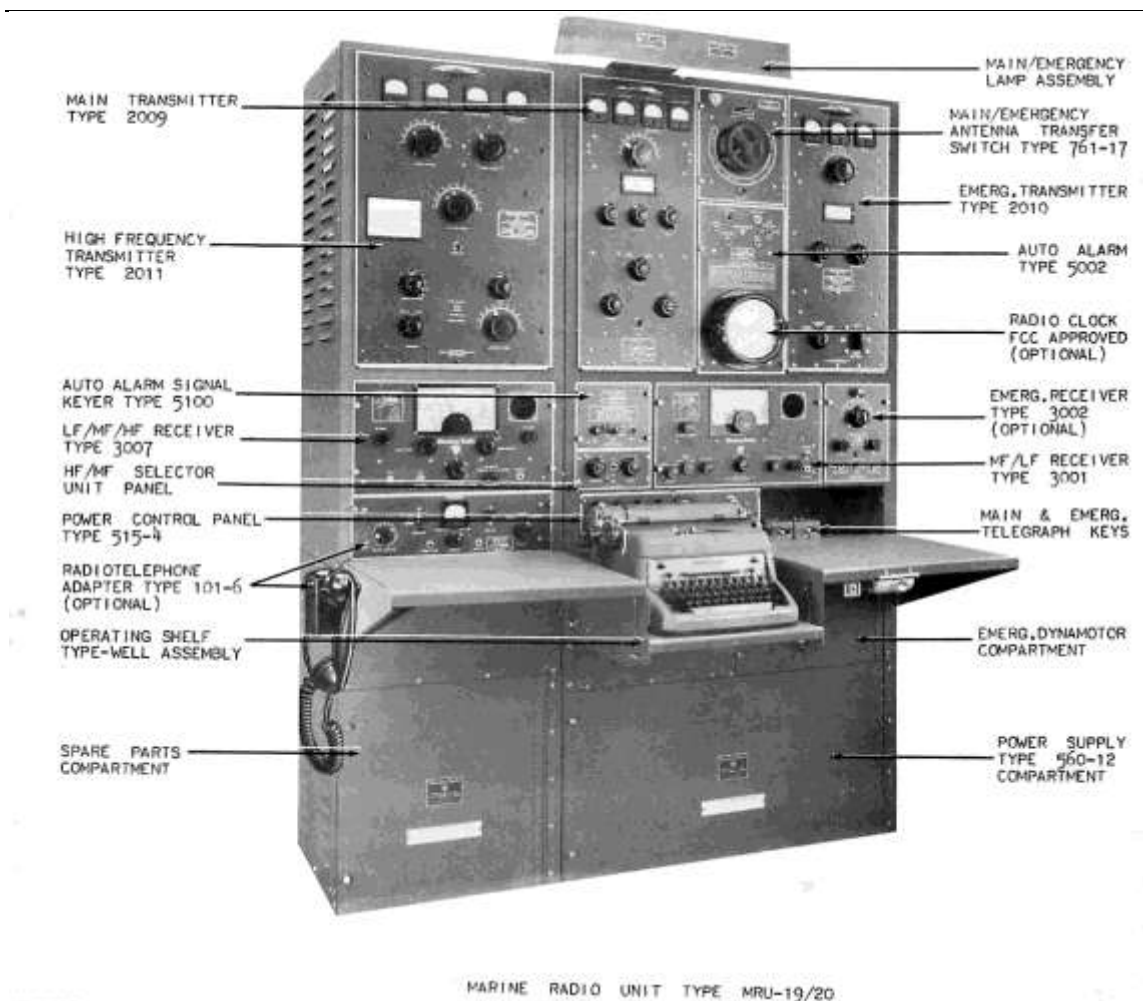


Captain O. K. Langdon

SS GYPSUM DUCHESS with call sign GHZE with a full cargo



Captain Claude Marcil
Radio Officer S. G. "Spud" Roscoe on duty in GYPSUM PRINCE call sign GHYX in 1970



ITT Telecommunications

Mckay Marine Radio Unit Type MRU-19/20 as fitted in SS GYPSUM COUNTESS

Since British law stated that all ships registered in that country had to be fitted with British radio equipment, the four with the RCA stations had to have new stations. The RCA stations were replaced with the standard British Marconi Globespan consoles. Because the American Mackay console was tied in with the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, GYPSUM COUNTESS was permitted to retain her MRU-19/20 console. The auto key had to be replaced with a British Redifon and she therefore carried both the original Mackay and the Redifon, but the remainder of her station remained the original Mackay unit.

The other four had their beautiful American RCA stations of 1947, the 4U, and 1956, the 5U, replaced with British Marconi Globespan stations. I sailed with more Globespans than any other station but I enjoyed the American stations more. I found them easier to operate and maintain. Actually this meant the COUNTESS became my favourite ship of the twelve I sailed in over the years. These five ships had beautiful long wire aerials and with a good electrical contact with the water, the steel hull, and those aerials, it was not hard to contact anyone from these stations.

My best distance on medium frequency was in GYPSUM COUNTESS. I passed a message to Bermuda Radio VRT from Cape Cod Bay. I was using 425 kiloHertz and VRT was using 426 kiloHertz. This took place at around noon hour or mid day. My signal had to travel over Cape Cod and we had no trouble at all.



Captain O.K. Langdon

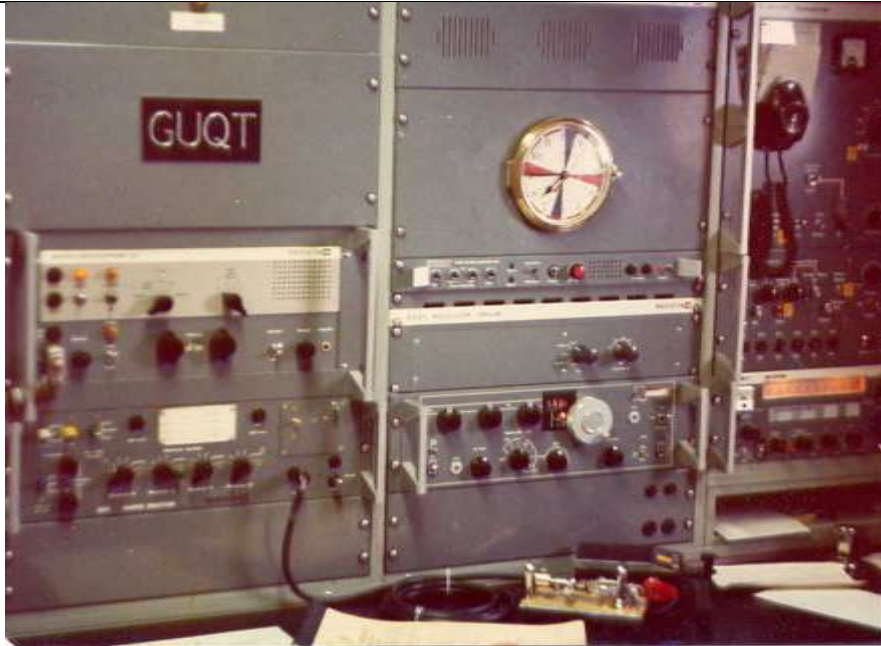
SS GYPSUM COUNTESS passing Manhattan, New York on the Hudson River

In 1975 GYPSUM PRINCE and GYPSUM QUEEN were sold to separate interests but both were again registered in Panama with different names. GYPSUM PRINCE became EL SIPRA with call sign HOZO, and GYPSUM QUEEN became BULK QUEEN with call sign H3YU. EL SIPRA went to a ship-breakers yard in Pakistan in 1976. BULK QUEEN was laid up alongside at Bath, Maine, and in May 1980 Joe Burgoyne took leave from station VCS and went over and operated her station on a voyage from Bath to Halifax where she went into refit. Her Captain on this voyage was Rudolf Kopel one of her masters while the GYPSUM QUEEN. Her new American owners tried to make her work, but sold her for scrap shortly after this refit. They apparently were going to haul phosphate from the mine near Sussex, New Brunswick but this did not work out.

The two new sisters that replaced these two were built in Canada at Collingwood, Ontario. Both were

registered in London, England and both were fitted with Redifon radio stations.

1976	GUQT	12861	GYPSUM KING
1976	GUZJ	12839	GYPSUM BARON



2nd Mate David Hutchings

This is the main operating position on board SS GYPSUM KING call sign GUQT in March 1976. This radio room and station was identical to SS GYPSUM BARON. Both ships were identical. This gives a better view of the VHF radiotelephone that was normally remote controlled from the bridge and the station control unit.



Captain Bill Cooper

Radio Officer S. G. "Spud" Roscoe and the main Redifon Transmitter on SS GYPSUM BARON with call sign GUZJ September 1976



Captain Bill Cooper

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe at the main operating position SS GYPSUM BARON. To the right of the console is the Emergency Transmitter, Battery Charging Unit and on the bottom the Emergency Receiver. The center console contains the clock with the Auto Alarm just below. A filtering unit for duplex telephone calls and the Main Receiver, one of the better receivers found on shipboard radio stations. To the left is the VHF radiotelephone with the station control unit just below.



Holman Studio, Middleton, Nova Scotia
Radio Officer S. G. "Spud" Roscoe



Captain O. K. Langdon

SS GYPSUM KING outbound on the Avon River, Nova Scotia, 1976

The Redifon transmitters that made up the main radio station of station GUQT and GUZJ was some of the best junk I ever tried to operate. I was the second radio officer to sail in each ship. They both had joined the fleet from their builder's yard and made a couple of trips before I joined them. I joined GYPSUM KING for a couple of trips in March 1976. When I left station VCS to join her, the other operators asked me to see if there was something that could be done about her main station. Captain J. A. Blinn was her Captain and when he used her main radiotelephone station around Nova Scotia, it was hard to believe that one transmitter could transmit an intelligible signal over so much of the radio spectrum. Captain Blinn could be heard on every receiver at station VCS. Needless to say this was very annoying and put station VCS out of service when he transmitted. Captain Blinn was also an active amateur radio operator with his amateur station VE1SZ. The only decent aerial on the KING was his amateur radio antenna. He had a long wire from his office up to the Sampson post on the forecandle. His amateur radio station worked well and did not cause any interference. The main radio station antenna for these two ships was simply a "gob of wire" strung between the mainmast and the funnel.

This GUQT station would also drop off when transmitting radiotelegraph for no reason and the operator would not realize this. Again, this was very annoying to the operators at VCS. All of a sudden the operator you are working stops for no reason and when told you stopped, you also had to be told where you stopped. There really wasn't much one could do with something that was defective on the drawing board and that of course was long before it went into production. In other words it was a defect that required special parts from the company that manufactured the equipment in England. When I transmitted radiotelegraph from these two ships I had to keep bending down and looking between my legs and under the chair at the red high voltage light at the bottom of the transmitter behind me. That light going off was the only indication one had that you had stopped transmitting.

These transmitters were very noisy when in operation. The blowers that cooled the unit sounded like a jet aircraft engine, which is the best description I could give them. Both ships were identical. The Radio Room was very small and on the starboard side of the ship behind the bridge. The Radio Officer's cabin was right behind the Radio Room. This cabin had a double bed and its own shower and washroom. Rather fancy compared to the older ships but I must admit that I liked the older ships better. Everyone had their own quarters on these ships and you did not see anyone after hours, whereas in the older ships everyone seemed to get out and mingle more. This was not only common to these gypsum ships but with all the newer ships built at this time including the coast guard fleet.



Captain J. Adrien Blinn, VE1SZ.

The only decent aerial in these two ships was Captain Blinn's amateur radio aerial as stated. The main station's aerial was a bunch of wire strung from the mast to the funnel. This aerial was not very long and not very pretty and it was hard to believe that both the station and aerial could be such a mess at that date and time. I joined GYPSUM BARON in September 1976 and made one or two trips in her. This was my last trip as a sea going radio operator.

This last trip became stranger than fiction, and that has been stated many times I know. The gypsum company hauled gypsum ore out of two ports in Nova Scotia after World War II and still hauls this ore out of these same two ports. These two ports are Hantsport on the mainland and Little Narrows on Cape Breton Island. Captain Robert T. Lucky was the senior captain with the gypsum fleet for many years until he retired about 1974. I had made many trips with Captain Lucky when he was master of the more or less senior ship, the SS GYPSUM COUNTESS. I have many fond memories of the trips I made with him and I am sure there are many who feel the same way. Captain Ray Riley was one of Captain Lucky's favourite mates. He is also an amateur radio operator with call sign VE1BHI. When the SS GYPSUM BARON joined the fleet in 1976 Captain Riley was made her permanent master. Captain Lucky was enjoying retirement in Florida at the time and when the BARON visited Jacksonville, Florida, for the first time, Captain Lucky went down to see this new ship and visit with his old friend. The excitement must have been a bit much for him because he collapsed and died as he stepped on board.

Captain Lucky was cremated and we picked up his ashes when we visited Stony Point, New York, with the BARON. On our way north we were to hold a funeral service for Captain Lucky at 4 PM ship's time on a Saturday, regardless of the ship's position. The ships were and are always on Eastern Time. We were to hold this service at that time because Captain Lucky's widow would be in a chapel in Florida at that time, their daughter in a chapel in New York and their son in a chapel in Arizona. I believe I remember the correct location of each.

Captain Riley told me it was my job to type up the funeral service. He told me he was of the Anglican faith so I got out the ship's medical book and looked up the funeral services in the back of the book. There are several there for various religious faiths. I typed up what I felt was a good service and Captain Riley made one minor change only. Captain Riley held the service back on the stern and those off duty participated in their best uniform. We checked for traffic in the area before the service and there was one ship only off in the distance that would not create any problem. The only thing that went wrong was no fault of ours. We

were light in water ballast and it was about 40 feet from where we held this funeral service to the surface of the water. When we dropped the wreath we had brought along it turned over and landed upside down. After the wreath landed we did the customary 360 degree turn with three long blasts on the steam whistle signaling; Good Bye, Good Luck and God Bless.

The late Frank Schnare was the mate on watch and he yelled come have a look, shortly after the turn. Frank was at the chart table and showed us that our funeral service had been held right bang on the longitude of Little Narrows and the latitude of Hantsport, the two ports Captain Lucky had visited most. Actually Captain Lucky and his brother were both British ship masters and had been in command of British tankers during the war. He became an American citizen right after joining the gypsum fleet at the end of the war. He told me he enjoyed working for gypsum because of the people he had to work with.



This is roughly the area of Captain Lucky's funeral service.



Captain Oscar Langdon

Four officers on the bridge of GYPSUM COUNTESS in 1963

Left to right:

Radio Officer Bob Johnson, Captain Oscar Langdon, 1st Mate Frank Schnare and Captain Ray Riley
Radio Officer Bob Johnson came ashore and operated Halifax Marine Radio VCS shortly after this and then went on to Fundy Traffic at Saint John, New Brunswick

Each gypsum ship carried around thirty-five crewmembers. Thomas E. Potts held the distinction of the longest serving Radio Officer in the fleet. Tom made his home at Devon, England and first joined the company when he signed on the GYPSUM PRINCE at New York in 1957. They were excellent ships in which to sail. Many of those who sailed in them had done nothing else. There were several brother, and father-son relationships. When I first joined this fleet I did so in order to gain some sea experience that I needed to upgrade my radio certificate to the first class. Before I realized it I had spent two most enjoyable years sailing in all the ships of the fleet at that time. I also sailed in them while on leave from the Canadian Coast Guard Ship TUPPER and while on leave from station VCS, Halifax Coast Guard Radio.

The GYPSUM DUCHESS and GYPSUM EMPRESS were sold for scrap and were replaced with a new ship built in Korea. This new ship was not only larger, at 12,702 gross tons but was a motor ship. Tom Potts was her Radio Officer when new and for her first years of service. She should have been a new GYPSUM QUEEN but the powers within the company decided to break from tradition and named her for a former Company Manager. When Mr. Kastner came aboard the ships for a visit he would give quite a demonstration in the proper art of inspecting a ship for cleanliness. So right after this ship joined the fleet the joke around the company was to properly inspect the ship's toilets in order to get one named for you.

1987 GJGV A.V. KASTNER

In 1989 the GYPSUM COUNTESS was sold and was registered in the Cayman Islands with the name GYPSY COUNTESS and call sign ZHFJ4. She lasted a short while at this and was then scrapped. I managed to work her with that beautiful Mckay station a few times before she was scrapped.

The head office for these ships had been in Hamilton, Bermuda for years. The crews that manned these ships were mainly from Nova Scotia going back to the very beginning in the 1800's. The ships hired their first female crewmembers in 1975. The Canadian crews were replaced with Filipino crews in February 1991, with the exception of the Captain, Chief Engineer and one of the mates. One gets very frustrated when they take a serious look at the attitude of the Canadian government to ships and shipping. There were many kids who earned college money working on these ships during their summer break. A good example was our provincial Lieutenant Governor, Myra Freeman in 2002, her husband, Larry Freeman, worked as a messman on these ships to earn college money. It makes one wonder at times. One would think some of

this transportation should be Canadian, especially when it is more or less Canadian real estate that is hauled away. The ships were registered at Hamilton, Bermuda, after the Filipino crews were on board one month. According to a company official these moves had to be made in order to help the parent company, United States Gypsum, out of debt. This meant the three ships had to change the London on the stern of each ship to Hamilton and have new call signs. They became:

ZCAN2	GYPSUM KING
ZCAN3	GYPSUM BARON
ZCAM9	A. V. KASTNER

We were communicating with the Filipino crews before the VCS station closed, although it had been a few years since we contacted one of these ships when the station closed. I heard the Radio Room in GYPSUM KING had been converted into an exercise room for the mates. The Radio Room was quite small but right behind the bridge and the perfect place to exercise while on watch.

The Gypsum Company did a lot of construction on the wharf at Hantsport in 2002. They replaced their old wooden wharf built in 1947 with a modern steel and concrete facility. The 'Rock Shed' that held the gypsum ore to be transported was extended another 300 feet to a length of 900 feet and this made it capable of holding 200,000 tons of gypsum.

The Gypsum Company wanted to build a new loading facility in Halifax between the Fairview Container Pier and Seaview Park but Halifax turned them down flat. Halifax claimed it would be too dusty, dirty and noisy, which I found hard to believe. There are a lot of things about this life that I find hard to believe and this was simply another one.

The Gypsum Company must feel that the Windsor-Hantsport Railway will be able to remain in service and handle their future needs. This small railroad is all that is left of the old Dominion Atlantic Railway and is a branch of Iron Rails, a Texas based company. The Windsor-Hantsport Railway hauls the gypsum ore in 22 railcars that can hold 80 tons each.

The Gypsum Company has managed to load these ships in less than three hours. This has been the same length of time to load all the vessels over the years at this Hantsport dock. The GYPSUM KING was replaced early in 2003 with another Korean built vessel named the GYPSUM CENTENNIAL with call sign ZCDC2. This new ship should be a new GYPSUM PRINCE but it looks like those names are gone. GYPSUM CENTENNIAL represents the fact that this company, a branch of the United States Gypsum Company as stated, has been in service for over one century. The GYPSUM CENTENNIAL is over twice the size of the A. V. KASTNER at 32,881 gross tons and is loaded in the same time frame of less than three hours. This is probably the main reason for the new docking facility. A draft of around twenty-six feet (about 8 meters) was the limit at most of the old discharge ports so one wonders how this will affect the whole operation. They no doubt are aware of this. At least I hope they are.

The fleet still on the books in November 2003 was as follows:

Name	Call Sign	Gross Registered Tons	Length Overall	Draft
GYPSUM KING	ZCAN2	12,272	150 Meters	9.3 Meters
GYPSUM BARON	ZCAN3	12,272	150 Meters	9.3 Meters
A. V. KASTNER	ZCAM9	12,702	158 Meters	9.6 Meters
GYPSUM CENTENNIAL	ZCDC2	32,881	197 Meters	11.5 Meters
SPANISH MIST	CFD7792	366	32.61 Meters	4.40 Meters



Gypsum Transportation Limited

This is the GYPSUM CENTENNIAL with international call sign ZCDC2. They have not only changed the colour of the hull from black to blue but have changed the machinery that discharges the cargo.

On August 19, 2007 I tried to learn the position of the Gypsum ships. GYPSUM CENTENNIAL appears to be the only one in service and was located off Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The last report on the A. V. KASTNER was 55 days old when she was last reported in the Mouth of the Bay of Fundy. The last report on GYPSUM BARON was on July 18th, 2007 when she was North of Libya in the Mediterranean Sea. I was unable to find any position on GYPSUM KING but she was still listed with the ZCAN2 call sign. It would appear that the KING and BARON are no longer a part of the Gypsum fleet. It is certainly a lot different than when I was sailing in these ships in the early 1970's.



Joan M. Roscoe

Gypsum Ship caps.

It has become popular to create a cap known as a ball cap with the ship's name and call sign.

I have seen several and one was my old ship CCGS TUPPER.

The A. V. KASTNER was at position 4312N 6948W on October 30th, 2007, at 1800 UTC. This is north of Boston in the Gulf of Maine. There is still nothing on GYPSUM KING. GYPSUM BARON is still listed North of Libya on July 18th, 2007. GYPSUM CENTENNIAL is listed off New York at 1200 UTC November 10th, 2007. One can obtain these positions along with a weather report from each ship at SailWx.Info.

Rumour had it in late 2007 that Gypsum was planning to have four new ships built in Brazil. Apparently there were to be two for the East Coast and two for the West Coast. The first was to be GYPSUM INTEGRITY and all four were to be identical to GYPSUM CENTENNIAL.

THE FOUNDATION FLEET

One could go on and on describing various fleets that have been in this area over the years. Another one worthy of mentioning is the Foundation Tug Fleet. Any attempt that I made to describe these vessels, the ones that carried radio or wireless operators, would be an insult to the excellent job Mr. Farley Mowat has already accomplished with his two books "Grey Seas Under" and "The Serpent's Coil". The fleet that carried a Radio Officer over the years was:

VGJQ FOUNDATION FRANKLIN
 VGKD FOUNDATION JUPITER
 MFML FOUNDATION JOSEPHINE
 VGKF FOUNDATION FRANCIS
 VCQS FOUNDATION LILLIAN

VGZG FOUNDATION VIGALANT

Because I have sailed with a few of those mentioned in these two books, I have found both my copies most enjoyable. Mentioned was the late Captain Norman Crowe, who was master of FOUNDATION LILLIAN. I sailed under Captain Crowe's command many times. I will always remember the pitter-patter of his old canvas bedroom slippers as he made a final check of our position for the day and left any final orders with the bridge. He would then come into the radio room for a chat just before I went off watch at ten in the evening. He and I would get into a discussion about one thing or another that would often last for hours before we both called it a day.

FOUNDATION LILLIAN retained Canadian registry and call sign VCQS for years but had several names. In 1953 she became the ESCORT and in 1954 the N. R. LANG. She again changed names in 1964 to the HAIDA CHIEFTAN and was registered by that name in the 1979 List of Shipping for Canada.

The FOUNDATION JOSEPHINE reverted to her former name SAMSONIA and went back to the Royal Navy Auxiliary fleet in 1952. She had retained her British registry and call sign MFML while the FOUNDATION JOSEPHINE. In 1973 she again changed her name and this time her registry. She became the Yugoslavian Tug JAKI with call sign YTCJ.

FOUNDATION VIGALANT was built in France in 1952 and was the French Tug ABEILLE 26 with call sign FNGO until she became FOUNDATION VIGALANT in 1958. She was sold to Greek interests in 1973 and was listed as the ENNEA, with radiotelephone only and call sign SV3916.

Foundation Maritime became a part of Marine Industries, Sorel, Quebec, in the spring of 1968 and was changed to Eastern Canada Towing in the fall of 1971, a part of the Smit and Cory Towing Group of England. The tugs bearing the prefix FOUNDATION (none equipped with a radio room or operator) have all had this changed to POINT, and have changed their colour schemes accordingly. The children's television program "Theodore Tugboat" is based on this fleet. Bring up THEODORE TOO in Google and get a description of this.



S. G. "Spud" Roscoe

This is the tug POINT HALIFAX alongside the Eastern Canada Towing berth Halifax with the tug POINT

CHEBUCTO on the other side of the berth May 1997.



S.G. "Spud" Roscoe

This is the tug POINT VIM and POINT HALIFAX alongside the dock at Eastern Canada Towing, Halifax May 1997.



S.G. "Spud" Roscoe

This is the tug POINT VIGOUR and POINT CARROLL at the Eastern Canada Towing berth, Halifax, Nova Scotia May 1997.

This fleet changed its colour scheme again in 2001 but I do not know if the change in the company goes any deeper than the paint on the tugs.

The ownership of these tugs may have changed again with the change in paint of 2001. On Thursday November 3rd, 2005, Eastern Canada Towing (still known as ECTUG) received a new 5,000 horse power tug at Halifax named SVITZER BEDFORD. According to the media release on this new tug built in Chile in September, 2005, Eastern Canada Towing is now a part of the Svitzer Wijsmuller Group, a wholly owned subsidiary of A. P. Moller Maersk based in Denmark. According to the same article Svitzer Wijsmuller has about 2,000 employees in 34 countries and operates a fleet of more than 250 vessels. And this same article claims SVITZER BEDFORD is now the most powerful tug in the Halifax fleet and is replacing two of the older tugs. The 370-tonne oceangoing SVITZER BEDFORD has modern navigational equipment and a firefighting system and is stern-driven and highly manoeuvrable. She is powered by two Caterpillar engines. The vessel can travel at 13.5 knots – but no radio room or radio officer. It is a shame because SVITZER BEDFORD has call sign XJAG. Canada has finally managed to issue four letter ship call signs from her X block of call signs. This one would make a good CW or radiotelegraph call sign.



Captain Bill Stewart, Sambro Head, Nova Scotia

This is the GMDSS station in SVITZER BEDFORD



Captain Bill Stewart, Sambro Head, Nova Scotia

This is the SVITZER BEDFORD late on Monday, January 21st, 2008, after some of the ice has been beaten off. Captain Stewart had been down the coast to Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia, to assist a ship loading wood

pulp for China.

Captain Stewart tells me that Svitzer, or the A. P. Moller – Maersk Group has bought out the Adstream Company of Australia and now boasts over 600 tugs world wide. The North America headquarters are situated in Miami, Florida. The engine exhaust stacks on the tugs have now been changed again from the Maltese cross to a four bladed propeller. He claims he has seen a lot of stack changes since he first went master of the FOUNDATION VIGOUR back in 1974.

October 30, 2007

This is the Tenth Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

KENT LINE LIMITED AND ATLANTIC TOWING LIMITED

Many tankers over the years have been registered in Canada, carried a Radio Officer and were owned by a number of the world's major oil companies via a Canadian subsidiary. The only company I will mention is located in Saint John, New Brunswick. The radio operators in this fleet contacted station VCS on a regular basis and some of these operators came ashore and operated the stations in this area.

The ships making up this fleet that were fitted with radiotelegraph were registered under Kent Line Limited. This fleet started in 1934 with a 729 gross ton tanker named ELKHOUND. She was registered in Saint John, New Brunswick, and assigned call sign VCXL. She did not have a radio of any description and the call sign was for visual communications only. ELKHOUND was sold to B. Hill and Sons at Bristol, England in 1943 and was last listed in 1948. She had been built at Bristol in 1929. This fleet started immediately after World War II with the WILDWOOD PARK a 10,000-deadweight ton tanker. This tanker was renamed IRVINGDALE in 1947 and was registered in Canada with her original call sign VDYJ. In 1952 another Park ship, the NIPIWAN PARK joined this fleet as the IRVING LAKE, also with her original call sign VDZN, but because she was a former 3,600 deadweight ton tanker, was fitted with radiotelephone only. After that the tanker fleet fitted with radiotelegraph was:

VDYJ IRVINGDALE
VCKX IRVING WOOD
HPBN IRVING BROOK
ELYJ IRVING GLEN
CYNJ IRVING STREAM
CYML IRVING OURS POLAIRE
VGWT M. J. BOYLEN
VXZR H1070
VGLN IRVING ARCTIC
VCRJ IRVING ESKIMO
VCRZ IRVING NORDIC
VCTG IRVING OCEAN
VCWX IRVING CANADA



Kent Line Limited

IRVING ESKIMO

Each of these ships will require a brief description in order to be understood. I have listed them with their Canadian call signs while they were registered in Canada, but two were never registered in Canada. IRVING BROOK is shown with her Panamanian call sign and was damaged early in her career. Her stern section became the stern of IRVING STREAM. IRVING GLEN is shown with her Liberian call sign.

The M. J. BOYLEN was renamed H1060 and four of these tankers were changed from Canadian to Bermuda registry:

ZCEH IRVING WOOD
 ZCEI IRVING STREAM
 ZCEJ H1070
 ZCEK H1060

Two were registered in the Bahamas:

ZFNN IRVINGDALE
 ZFNW IRVING GLEN

In 1947 IRVINGDALE was fitted with a Marconi station. This station had the Reliance transmitter, Salvor emergency transmitter, Seaway radiotelephone, Mercury main receiver, Electra high frequency receiver, and Alert 500 kHz receiver. This was the equipment we had to learn inside and out while I was at Radio College of Canada, Toronto, in 1961. The only piece of equipment I had to study at Radio College and sailed with later was the Marconi Lodestone Direction Finder. IRVINGDALE was also fitted with a Decca navigator and a very high frequency audio modulated station for use between 156 and 174-mHz. This is according to her 1947 Radio Licence so has to be accurate but hard to believe. VHF did not become popular until the 1970's.

When the Bahamas gained their independence from Great Britain this country was allocated the block of call signs from C6A to C6Z and sometime after this IRVING GLEN's call sign became C6NW.

IRVINGDALE had been scrapped by this time. IRVING GLEN was scrapped in 1979 and her RCA 5U station went with her. IRVING GLEN was replaced with the IRVING ESKIMO.



Radio Officer Skid O'Sullivan

This is Radio Officer Skid O'Sullivan on duty in MV IRVING GLEN with call sign C6NW.



Radio Officer Skid O'Sullivan

This is the Radio Room in IRVING GLEN with call sign C6NW.

The IRVING OURS POLAIRE was fitted with a Marconi Globespan station, but to my knowledge never carried a Radio Officer. The IRVING WOOD never carried a Radio Officer, but was listed as capable of transmitting on 500 kHz with emergency equipment, possibly a lifeboat radio of some description. How this British ship, IRVING WOOD with call sign ZCEH of 2,491 gross tons managed to sail so long in this area without a proper radio station and Radio Officer was one of many mysteries.

H1060 and H1070 had the standard Marconi Globespan station and for some reason were changed back to the Canadian flag in January of 1980. This change in registry probably involved access to fuel in some political manner. Naturally these two ships did not get back their former Canadian call signs.

VCJQ H1060
VCKW H1070

Both the H1060 and H1070 were laid up at Sydney, Nova Scotia, in 1981 when the IRVING OCEAN joined this fleet. They both went to the ship breaker's yard from there.

IRVING STREAM's radio room was fitted with equipment of many nationalities. She used a British Marconi Atalanta and a British Eddystone for receivers. Her main high frequency transmitter was a 375-watt German Telefunken and her medium frequency transmitter was a Netzteil, Sender MS 350, manufactured by the Danish Hagenuk Company. The emergency transmitter was also from the Hagenuk Company. Usually these "hodge podge" stations were easier to operate and maintain because the components were not all crowded into the one container. This station gave a good clear signal when it had the proper voltage fed to it from the main generators in the engine room. One voyage gave us a rough time at station VCS because of this poor voltage. These older stations always sounded better because of the many harmonics that made up the signal from their transmitters. The signals from the last radiotelegraph transmitters had been perfected to the point of boredom. The radiotelegraph stations prior to the last of these stations in service were such that one could tell, with practice, the make of the transmitter before the operator identified with his call sign. IRVING STREAM was scrapped shortly after IRVING OCEAN joined this fleet. IRVING OCEAN was launched in 1981.

During the mid 1970's the Saint John Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, one of the many companies that made up the Irving Empire, built seven tankers for the Esso Oil interests and six for the Shell Oil interests. The seven Esso tankers with their Liberian call signs were:

A8PR ESSO EVERETT
ELXN ESSO HALIFAX
6ZLD ESSO MONTREAL
5LFY ESSO PROVIDENCE
6ZRL ESSO SAINT JOHN
5LPR ESSO SAINT PETERSBURG
A8XC ESSO TORONTO

The six Shell tankers with their call signs were:

D5OZ ELONA
D5MJ ENSIS
GXUN ENTALINA
GVUR ERINNA
GXXQ ERODONA
GVUQ ETREMA

The first two on the list were Liberian flag and the other four British. Those who know shells will recognize these names because Shell Oil named their ships after various shells. The hierarchy of Shell Oil neither understood nor appreciated the full potential of the marine communication world. I found several cases where the various national organizations made Shell clean up the working and living conditions for their Radio Officers within the ships they owned in those countries. Yet Esso was just the opposite. If you happened to work a poor Esso radio officer you did not work him for long. Two of these radio officers come to mind. The Spanish radio officer sailing in ESSO BAHAMAS with call sign 6ZBN that sailed around eastern Canada and Hudson Bay in the 1970's was perfection to say the least. The Filipino radio officer in ESSO KURE with call sign 5LSI around 1974 was another. Those who know the continental radiotelegraph code will note that 5LSI has one dash only. This Radio Officer transmitted this call sign as a musical wave of dits with the one dash right where it should be. It was definitely 5LSI and I spent all summer practicing but never came close to imitating the way he transmitted it.

The Irving Oil tankers carried excellent radio officers and they were not always Canadian. Quite a few were British and some came from the many other nations one can think of. When the Irving Company added the new tankers they built in the 1970's they copied some of the features of the thirteen they built for Esso and Shell. The IRVING ARCTIC, IRVING ESKIMO and the much smaller IRVING NORDIC were copies of the Esso tankers. Those three had excellent radio rooms just behind the bridge. The IRVING OCEAN and IRVING CANADA were copies of the Shell tankers. Now I understand the criticism better. The radio rooms of those two were on the deck below the bridge within the officer's living accommodation. Not only was this an awkward position, it was a damn nuisance because of the noise involved while carrying out one's normal duties. It was lonely as well. At least behind the bridge the radio officer and duty mate got to know each other if nothing else. Why Irving Oil did this remains a mystery. There must have been something in it to attract them to this poor layout.

All five new Irving tankers were fitted with the latest from the British Marconi Company in the form of the Conqueror as the main transmitter and the Apollo as the two main receivers. IRVING ARCTIC made some interesting voyages when new, including a trip to Australia. Tony Charon was the lucky Radio Officer on the Australia run. Bill Kerwin sailed as her Radio Officer on a voyage to Brazil in 1981 after an excellent voyage to the African Congo in 1980 with IRVING ESKIMO. Bill is from Saint John, New Brunswick, and after sailing in the Irving ships went ashore as a controller with Fundy Traffic. The radio officers in this fleet made several contacts each day with station VCS when at sea. IRVING CANADA made her first voyage, a run from Saint John, New Brunswick, to Montreal, Quebec, on November 3rd, 1981. IRVING NORDIC was assigned to the coastal service of eastern Canada with AIME GAUDREAU, IRVING OURS POLAIRE, and IRVING WOOD. After the death of Mr. Kenneth C. Irving, the founder and general manager of this empire, there were a number of changes made. The coastal tankers were renamed with the suffix KENT. The funnels were repainted a bright green with the name Kent painted on them. The funnels had been yellow with the Irving diamond crest so common around eastern Canada. The deep sea or ocean going tankers retained this yellow funnel scheme. Right after World War II Mr. Irving purchased a few former naval corvettes and converted them to freighters. I was told 20, there may have been 5 and I found three. The three were registered in Newfoundland as:

VOQM GALLOWAY KENT
VOTL WELLINGTON KENT
VOPX REXTON KENT

The Irving family is from Kent County, New Brunswick and at least some of these names are villages in that county. GALLOWAY KENT was the former HMCS NORTH BAY, WELLINGTON KENT was the former HMCS HUNTSVILLE and REXTON KENT was the former HMCS LONG BRANCH. Apparently HMCS COBOURG became DUNDAS KENT and HMCS FERGUS became HARCOURT KENT but I was unable to find any information on their radio stations. They were definitely radiotelephone only because the three I found were fitted with radiotelephone only and these ships were not big enough to be fitted with commercial radiotelegraph. In order to be accurate one should check the actual record of the ship that should provide the call sign, and then compare that with the record of the radio station. There is a possibility that HMCS NORTH BAY was the Norwegian ship KENT COUNTY II with call sign LMMK for a while. If so, she carried a Radio Officer according to the record of the radio station. The three coastal tankers IRVING NORDIC, AIME GAUDREAU, and IRVING OURS POLAIRE were renamed some of these exact names and I no longer remember which tanker received which name. They retained their radio call signs so a List of Ship Stations for 1996 or later should sort them out. They did not use radiotelegraph so I lost interest.

In 1992 some of this fleet was registered in the West Indies at Barbados. Two of these ships became:

8PAJ IRVING OCEAN
8PAO IRVING CANADA

These ships disappeared around this time as they switched from radiotelegraph to satellite communications along with so many that we had communicated with over the years. The Irving owned Saint John Shipyard and Dry Dock Limited built several new ships for this fleet after those described above and had at least two

large oil tankers built in a foreign yard. But these new ships were not fitted with radiotelegraph and did not carry a radio operator so I had no interest in them.

The IRVING NORDIC went to the Arctic in 1988 and carried a radio officer who maintained contact with station VCS. Arthur Fletcher was a very well known radio officer with this fleet and seemed to be assigned to each of these ships when new. I believe it was Art who made this voyage in IRVING NORDIC. While in the Arctic he transmitted a very long message of several hundred words. Shortly after this the station supervisor got a phone call from one of the managers at the Irving Saint John office wanting to know what became of this message. He said he was in the Radio Room of IRVING NORDIC and had watched Art transmit it. Station VCS had another modernization in 1988 that included a computer operated message system. This system took some time for the operators to learn to operate. This missing message was found stuck in one of these computers. The operator at the station had copied the message but did not get it any farther than the computer on his operating desk.

In addition to these tankers the Irving Empire owned two ships that were designed and built to haul wood products. These two were fitted with radiotelegraph, carried a radio officer and communicated with the VCS station continuously when at sea. The various Irving companies grow, harvest, purchase and sell a lot of wood products. These two ships had been built and used in Europe to haul wood products before they were purchased by the Irving organization. The German ship UTA SABINE with call sign DHBJ became the IRVING FOREST. The Finnish ship FINNALPINO with call sign OIBR became the IRVING TIMBER. Both were renamed when purchased by the Irving Company in the 1980's and I believe operated under Kent Line with the tankers.

VSBG8	IRVING FOREST
VSBT2	IRVING TIMBER

Both ships were registered in Bermuda. The IRVING FOREST was on a voyage from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Rouen, France, with a cargo of wood pulp and newsprint when she encountered heavy weather in mid-Atlantic, January 1990. She developed ballast problems and began to list heavily and lost engine power, and needless to say transmitted a distress call. The tanker NESTOR rescued all 19 people on board, before she sank on January 11th, 1990. Among the crew were Canadians, Britons and Filipinos.

Atlantic Towing, another Irving Company, had a large fleet of tugs named with the IRVING prefix. The three largest were IRVING MIAMI with so called call sign VC8137 at 972 gross tons, IRVING BIRCH with call sign VDYT at 827 gross tons, and IRVING MAPLE with call sign VGSF at 487 gross tons. This is another example that the Department of Communications had no ruling on who was assigned what from their international allotment of call signs. Most of these tugs had a suffix of a well-known type of wood, OAK, HEMLOCK, MAPLE, and so on. But only two of the tugs carried a Radio Officer and both had the same name, IRVING BIRCH. The first of these was a steam-powered tug and was registered in the United Kingdom. The second replaced that one and was built at the Company's Shipyard, Saint John Shipbuilding and Dry Dock. This one was launched in 1967 and was fitted with radiotelegraph, the Marconi Oceanspan station.

GBHH	IRVING BIRCH
VDYT	IRVING BIRCH



Wilson Studio, Saint John, New Brunswick

This is the motor tug IRVING BIRCH April 14th, 1967 with call sign VDYT.

The crew in IRVING BIRCH had some fantastic trips during 1979 alone. She had been to England, Colombia, twice to the Arctic including Greenland, plus a trip to one of the United States ports on the Gulf of Mexico, besides the mundane life of towing barges of oil around eastern Canada. Atlantic towing purchased a tug they named IRVING CEDAR during the 1980's that is worth mentioning. This tug did not carry a radio officer, was radiotelephone only and registered in Bermuda as a yacht with call sign ZFWI. One wonders what was behind that and for what reason. On the Atlantic Towing Limited website in 2004 IRVING CEDAR was renamed ATLANTIC CEDAR and listed as registered in Barbados with Canadian call sign VOSV from Newfoundland's old block of call signs. A vessel registered in Barbados is assigned a call sign with 8P as the prefix.

When the coastal tankers were renamed with a KENT suffix in each name these tugs of Atlantic Towing were renamed also. They all received the ATLANTIC prefix and retained their various type of wood as the suffix. In other words IRVING ELM became ATLANTIC ELM and so on up and down the list of names.

The Atlantic Towing barges were named after fish: IRVING WHALE, IRVING DOLPHIN, IRVING PORPOISE and so on. I believe these were also renamed and the only one I know for certain is that IRVING WHALE was renamed ATL 2701.

I did not meet anyone who had sailed in an Irving vessel that did not enjoy the experience. The majority spoke very highly of this fleet. The only Canadian ship I wanted to sail in and didn't was IRVING BIRCH. I did not get this experience because I simply kept putting it off until it was too late. I regret that I did not get to sail in this fleet.

SHIPYARD CALL SIGNS

All the shipyards in Canada were assigned a four letter call sign for use in testing the radio station fitted in a new ship prior to the ship being handed over to its owner. The Saint John Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company held call sign VDDC, and we often received a call from one of those ships for a radio check whether the new ship was to be registered in Canada or some foreign country. Occasionally a new ship from one of the other shipyards would call as well. Those calls would sound rather odd at times, especially if the ship had a very odd foreign name and used the Canadian call sign. At least one ship built for Cuba left her ship builder's yard in Quebec and came to Halifax with the Canadian shipyard call sign. This ship had a date for a name like so many Cuban ships and it was possibly MAY 26th if I remember correctly. It may have been Mr. Castro's birthday for all I know. I remember one I think it was the APRIL 19th followed us for more than a day in the Caribbean Sea. She appeared to be a large molasses carrier.

SHIPBOARD EQUIPMENT

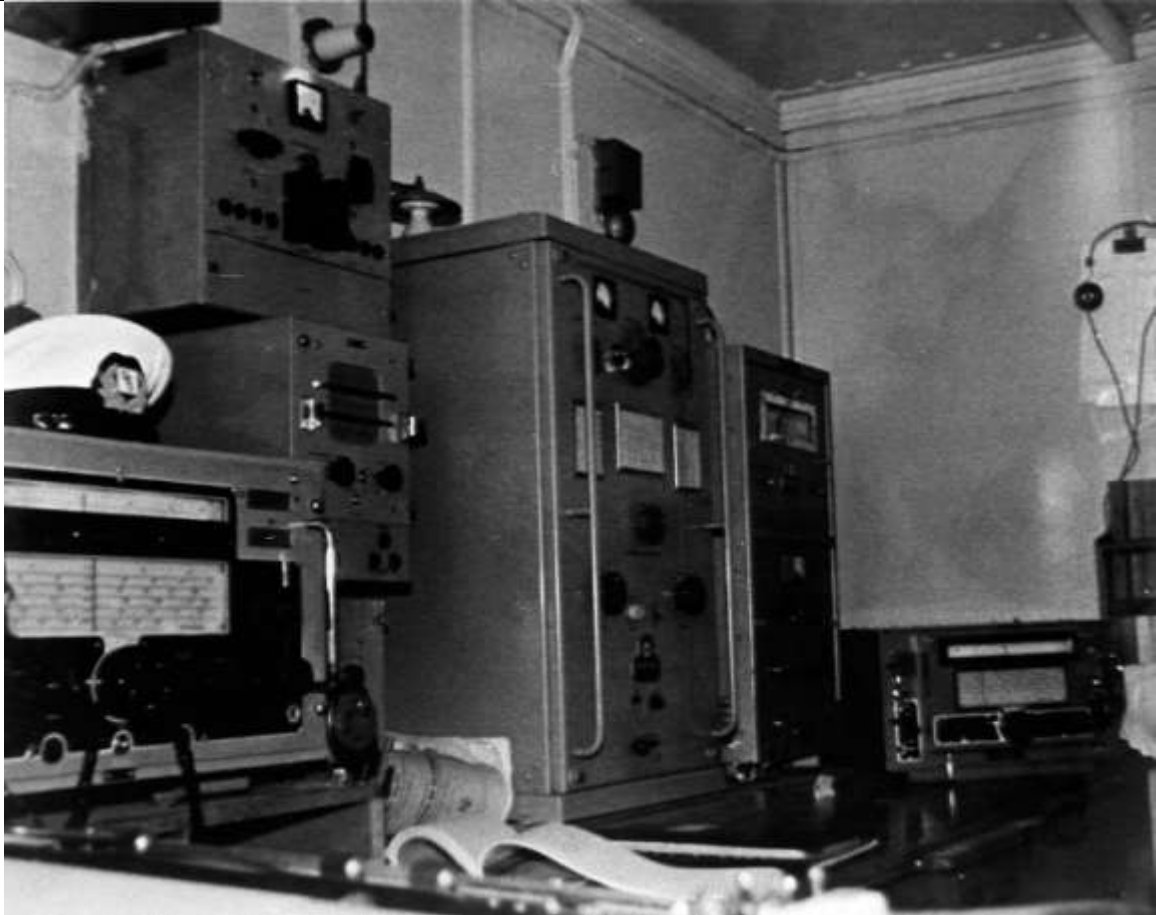
The modern technology resulting in the numerous electronic magic boxes we now have was greatly speeded up during World War II. We would eventually have had these things, but they would still be some time off in the future. By the late 1950's the use of radar and direction finding had advanced to the point that so many ships carried their own equipment that it became feasible to close these services at Camperdown Radio VCS. Today, even small yachts and fishing vessels have radar and the direction finder is never used in a vessel of any kind. The only place one will find a direction finder in use is a few computer-operated units on a few coast stations. This is on the VHF radiotelephone channels and the unit will provide a visual indication of the station's (ship's) actual location on a chart shown on a computer screen. The Canadian Coast Guard has removed all the radio beacons for use by direction finders fitted in ships. Direction finders were mandatory in most ships up until the radio officer was removed because they were the only means of obtaining a bearing on a ship's transmitter. This was a big asset in trying to locate a vessel in distress.

There are now several satellites in place over the world providing a system of navigation for everything imaginable. These are used in a system known as the Global Positioning System or GPS. One can get a GPS unit in their automobile or ship, their aircraft or even a hand held unit to use anywhere. This system has replaced the Direction Finder, Loran, Omega, Decca, and any number of other familiar navigational aids that were so well known not so long ago. My son carries a cell telephone and a hand held GPS unit with him at all times in his 14-foot aluminum boat. This gives him communications and navigation capabilities the Captains of the Queen's (SS QUEEN MARY and SS QUEEN ELIZABETH) could not dream of back in the 1930's.

The most difficult part in getting these new electronic aids to work in ships was in training the crews to use them. For years the Captain was the sole person in charge of a ship and placed on a very high level. Many of these older Captains were not very well educated and on getting to know a few you often wondered how they ever elevated themselves in the first place. When the ship owner installed a new aid like radar many Captains would not permit anyone to touch them. One case in point is rather interesting and rather amusing for us today. The Captain of the ferry PRINCESS HELENE that operated between Digby, Nova Scotia, and Saint John, New Brunswick, for many years, had such high regard for his radio officer that when radar was first installed he made them install it in the radio room for this operator. But in the majority of cases these units were installed in their proper place on the bridge although no one but the Captain was allowed to touch them.

Captain Charles Melanson, an old friend and shipmate of mine tells an interesting story which will help explain this. Charlie had been master for some time in the small wooden freighters owned by his family in Gilberts Cove, Nova Scotia. These small wooden ships eventually disappeared because of the routine changes made in shipping over the years. Charlie then had to get out and sail in the larger ships. One of these trips involved a run off the Labrador Coast with one of these Captains who claimed the radar his own personal toy. Charlie knew radar well by this time and was becoming concerned about the possibility of icebergs in their path, when he took over his watch as mate. This Captain was still on the bridge, had the radar turned on with the gain turned down so far it was of no use to them although did appear to be working and not seeing anything. Charlie noticed this immediately but did not dare say anything and had to wait

until the Captain was out of sight. When the Captain left the bridge for a few moments Charlie made his move and reached over and turned up the gain on the radar. Sure enough, there she was. A large berg was dead ahead but luckily still time to leave all as is and let the Captain find it on the radar. If Charlie had said anything on seeing this, he would have been fired for touching the radar, and no mention would have been made of his preventing a disaster.



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is the Radio Room MV QUEBEC call sign VCXL April 1971

Left to right:

Atalanta Main Receiver

Battery Charging Unit Top

Alert Emergency Receiver Middle

The Autokey on the bottom with only a corner showing

Reliance Emergency Transmitter

Seaguard Auto Alarm

Mercury or Electra Back-up Receiver

The QUEBEC had the Irving's old ELKHOUND VCXL call sign.



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is another view of the Radio Room MV QUEBEC call sign VCXL April 1971

That is a good view of a Gypsum Transportation Limited Cap and left to right:

Oceanspan VI Main Transmitter

Atalanta Main Receiver

Autokey Automatic Distress Key with the Alert Emergency Receiver on top and the Battery Charging Unit sitting on the Alert Receiver.

Just above the clock is the Antenna Switching Unit.

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT SCHOOL AND THE LOSS OF THE CERTIFICATE

Around 1960 the Department of Transport not only amalgamated many of the Coast and Aeradio stations into a combined station, but decided to open a school and give all new operators additional training over and above their commercial certificates. This school was to be known as the Air Services Training School and was first established in the upper floor of the terminal building at the Uplands Airport, Ottawa, Ontario. The first class graduated in 1960. Up until 1966 all these graduates were holders of at least the commercial second-class certificate from private schools within Canada or the British Commonwealth. Most came straight from these schools.

With the newer radio regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention at Montreux, 1965, it became possible for Canada to terminate the necessity for the operators to hold a radio certificate on the stations within the country. After that the only requirement to become a radio operator on any station in Canada was a high school education and graduation from the Air Services Training School that was

expanded accordingly. A new modern and very expensive school was opened in 1979 at Cornwall, Ontario, replacing the Ottawa school.

One question that always puzzled me and I did not find a suitable answer was the technicians in the Coast Guard Ships. The law stated that anyone who maintained a ship's radio station must hold the required certificate of proficiency in radio according to the size of the ship the station was fitted. These technicians went aboard the Coast Guard Ships in 1962 and did all the maintenance on the ship's equipment. No one said anything and the Radio Officer's did nothing to prevent this. It should have been their job to maintain this equipment. One technician I knew used to brag that he made a trip to the Arctic one year and changed one radar tube only for the entire trip. If his services were not in more demand than that, he would have made an excellent second operator if this had been laid out according to law, and according to the way the seafaring nations operated. Then there was the Captain who hired a technician to come aboard and repair the main radio station to find nothing but a blown fuse. That Canadian Radio Officer involved must have felt very foolish if nothing else. When one finds records of these things it is probably a good thing it is all over.

In 1993 all coast station radio operators were given a certificate of proficiency in radio called a Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate. This certificate looked like the old First Class and Radiocommunication Operator's General Certificate (Maritime), abbreviated to RGMC and came complete with a five-year expiration limit. If there was ever an outfit that could down grade anything of an international nature to make it look like something "it ain't" it was this outfit. What this certificate was supposed to accomplish, besides a waste of the tax dollar, was a mystery to me. It gave one the feeling it was to be used in the coast guard ships with the idea it might impress those in foreign nations that a Canadian coast guard ship might visit with a radio operator on board.



Department of Transport

This is the Radio Operator Class "23" Air Services Training School, Ottawa, 1963 and S. G. "Spud" Roscoe is second from the left in the front row. Unfortunately I can no longer name very many of them. Howard Vallis is third from the left in the back row and Howard retired from the Canadian Coast Guard in

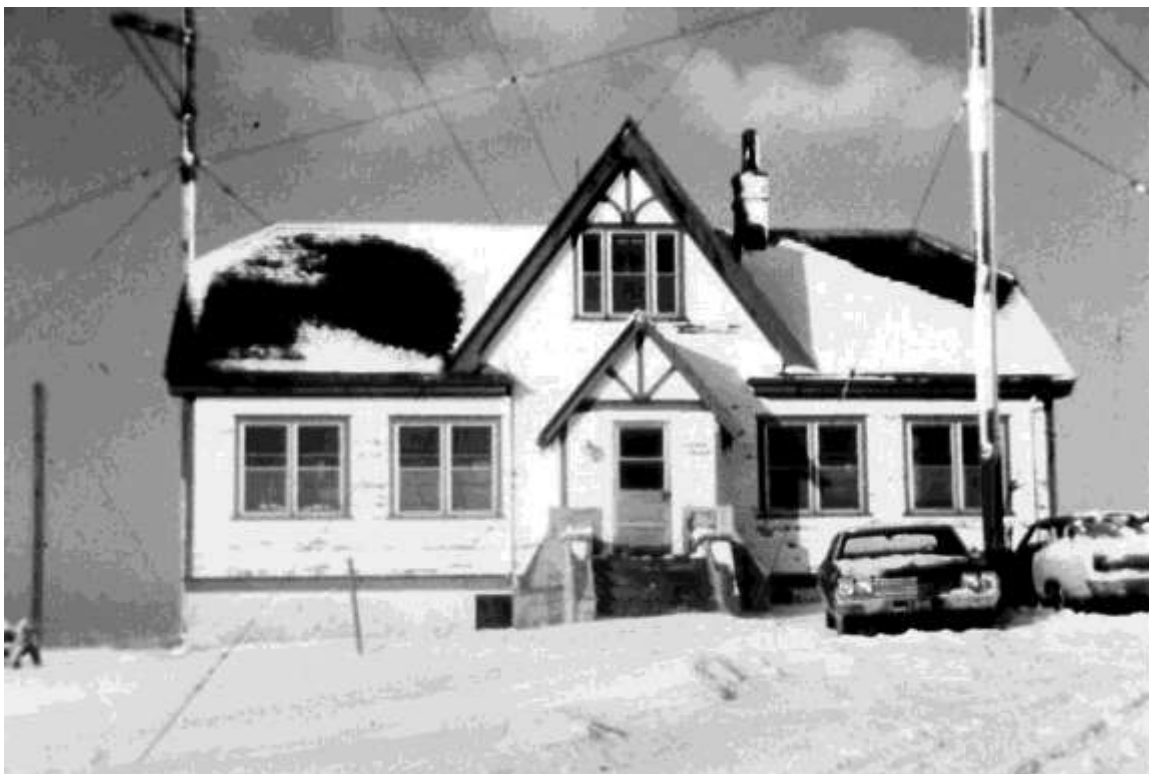
Dartmouth. Bob Bullbrook was one of the instructors and he is fourth from the left in the front row. Bob held Jerry Proc's VE3FAB call sign at that time. I held call sign VE1AGN at that time and changed it to VE8RM a few days after this photograph was taken when I was transferred to Teslin, Yukon Territory.

COMBINING THE HALIFAX AREA STATIONS

The technology of radiotelephone improved rapidly after the war to the point the majority of boats of all types were fitted and with this increased workload and the closing of the radar and direction finder service, it was decided to move Halifax Radio VBQ to Camperdown Radio VCS. About the only real improvement made to VBQ after the war was the addition of the other Collins AG10 transmitter, which naturally brought forth a sigh of relief from the operators at VBQ. With the move of VBQ to VCS it became necessary to build a transmitter site at Pennant Point, and a remote receiver site just south of Ketch Harbour. This move was made on November 1st, 1962 and this combined station was renamed Halifax Marine Radio VCS. The word marine in the name became popular in Canada with coast stations, in order to separate the station, or portion of a station from the Aeradio Station. A number of the Canadian Aeradio stations and Coast stations were combined to form one station in order to cut down on the cost involved of operating two stations in the same area. This word marine must have sounded rather odd to foreign operators because it is the only place in the world they would have heard it, because everywhere else, the name of the station, the word radio, and the call sign was all one would hear. VCS was one of the few stations not combined with the local Aeradio station, although over the years the VCS operators went out to the Halifax International Airport, forty miles away, and filled in at the Aeradio station for awhile for one reason or another. The West Coast sister of VCS, a smaller but similar station, Vancouver VAI, was combined with Vancouver Aeradio and was located at the Vancouver International Airport.

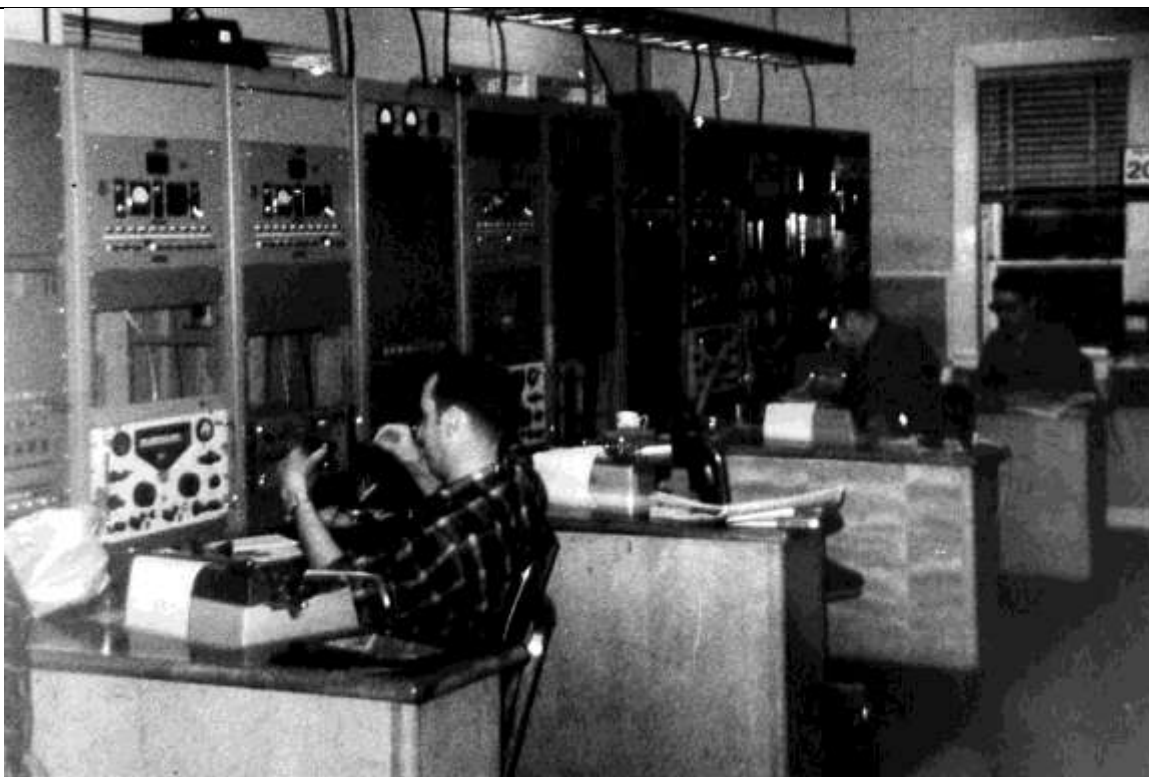
The Royal Canadian Navy during the early 1960's equipped most of their vessels with radio-teletype and wanted to terminate training their radio operators in radiotelegraph during the early stages of their training. They wanted to retain radiotelegraph at CFH for their smaller and auxiliary vessels and as a backup for their regular radio-teletype communications. Therefore, the British Commonwealth Communication Scheme portion of Halifax Radio CFH was transferred to Halifax Marine Radio VCS on April 1st, 1964. This necessitated a further expansion of VCS to include high frequency transmitters, receivers, and extra operating positions for the greater number of operators required to operate this equipment.

From improved shipboard equipment, much more powerful transmitters and more sensitive receivers, the British Commonwealth Communications Scheme was phased out in April 1968. After that a ship monitored the traffic list transmitted every odd hour on the hour, Greenwich Mean Time, at the VCS station. They also monitored the traffic list for any station the ship could expect traffic for one reason or another. If a vessel had a message to receive or one to send it called the station. The message traffic was either sent or received by the operator on receipt of the call. There was no longer free communications between countries. These stations handled messages to anywhere in the world for a fee and it was cheaper if the ship called a station in the country to which the message was addressed.



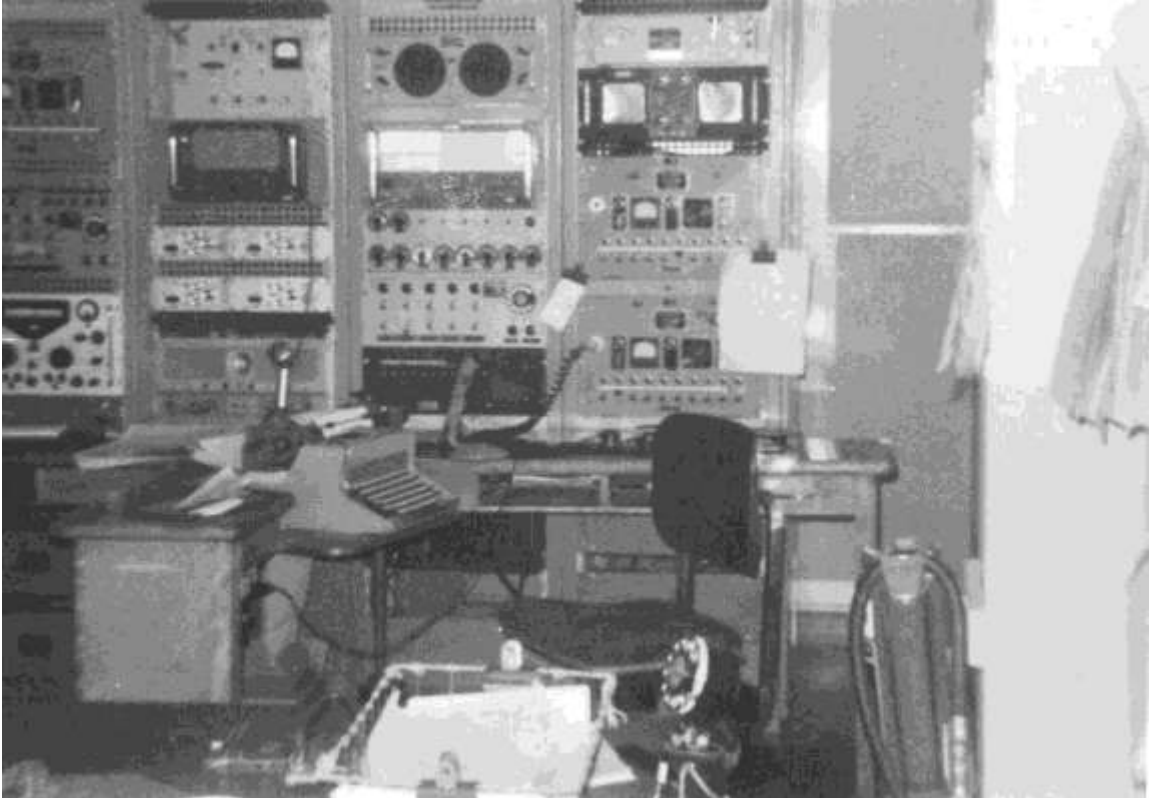
Roger Teed

This is the Operations Building Halifax Marine Radio VCS just prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970



Roger Teed

This is the Operations Room Halifax Marine Radio VCS just prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970



Shaw

This is the Operations Room Halifax Marine Radio VCS just prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970



Shaw

This is the Teletype Operating Position Halifax Marine Radio VCS prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970



Shaw

This is the Operations Room Halifax Marine Radio VCS prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970 and that is the late Sid Hatcher VE1BJR with his feet up in the middle and the late Ted Daley VE1AIG operating just behind him. If you can help in identifying any of the others please contact me or if you have anything you would like to pass along I would appreciate hearing from you.



Shaw

This is the Operations Room Halifax Marine Radio VCS prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970



Shaw

This is the Operations Room Halifax Marine Radio VCS prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970



Shaw

This is the Operations Room Halifax Marine Radio VCS prior to moving to Ketch Harbour 1970

THE MOVE OF STATION VCS TO KETCH HARBOUR

With the amalgamation of the three stations, Halifax Radio CFH, Halifax Radio VBQ, and Camperdown Radio VCS, at Camperdown, and the fact the old operations building was now reaching thirty-five years of age, it was decided to improve the Station's building and equipment. For various reasons it was decided to do this at the Camperdown Radio VCS, Receiver Site in Ketch Harbour, a few miles down the road on the south side of the village of Ketch Harbour. One of the main reasons was the fact that the equipment at the remote receiver and transmitter sites had to be connected to the operating position at Camperdown via telephone lines leased from Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company Limited. The Ketch Harbour site eliminated the lines necessary for the remote receivers, and Pennant Point, the remote transmitter site, was much closer to Ketch Harbour, making these leased lines shorter and less costly.

Therefore, Halifax Marine Radio VCS, the largest coastal radio station in Canada, moved from the old original site on the hill overlooking the approaches to Halifax harbour to a new more modern operations building on March 1st, 1970. My impression on first seeing this new site was that of a gravel pit with a paved driveway and over the years my feelings towards the site have not changed. The excellent view from the old site did much towards my feelings of the new site. Any spare moments that we had to look out the window were now spent staring at a choice of sand, gravel, weeds, or fog-stunted spruce trees, instead of a beautiful view overlooking the approaches to Halifax harbour, and the ships traversing that area.

The operations building constructed and placed in service at Camperdown, July, 1935, was torn down and removed during the summer of 1980, ten years after the station at Ketch Harbour opened and forty-five years after the building was constructed at Camperdown. Douglas Garrison, Sambro, purchased the site a few years after this and converted it into a housing subdivision.



Basil Carroll

This is Radio Operator Basil Carroll operating the 8-mHz radiotelegraph position at VCS with Technician Bill Turner sitting in the medium frequency radiotelephone position probably 1975. Bas Carroll came to VCS in 1973 and was a Shift Supervisor from 1975 until promoted Area Operations Manager in 1978. He retired as the Regional Standards Officer. He holds amateur radio call sign VE1VAY. Cape Hopes Advance VAY was his first radio station.



John Rae and Paul Britton



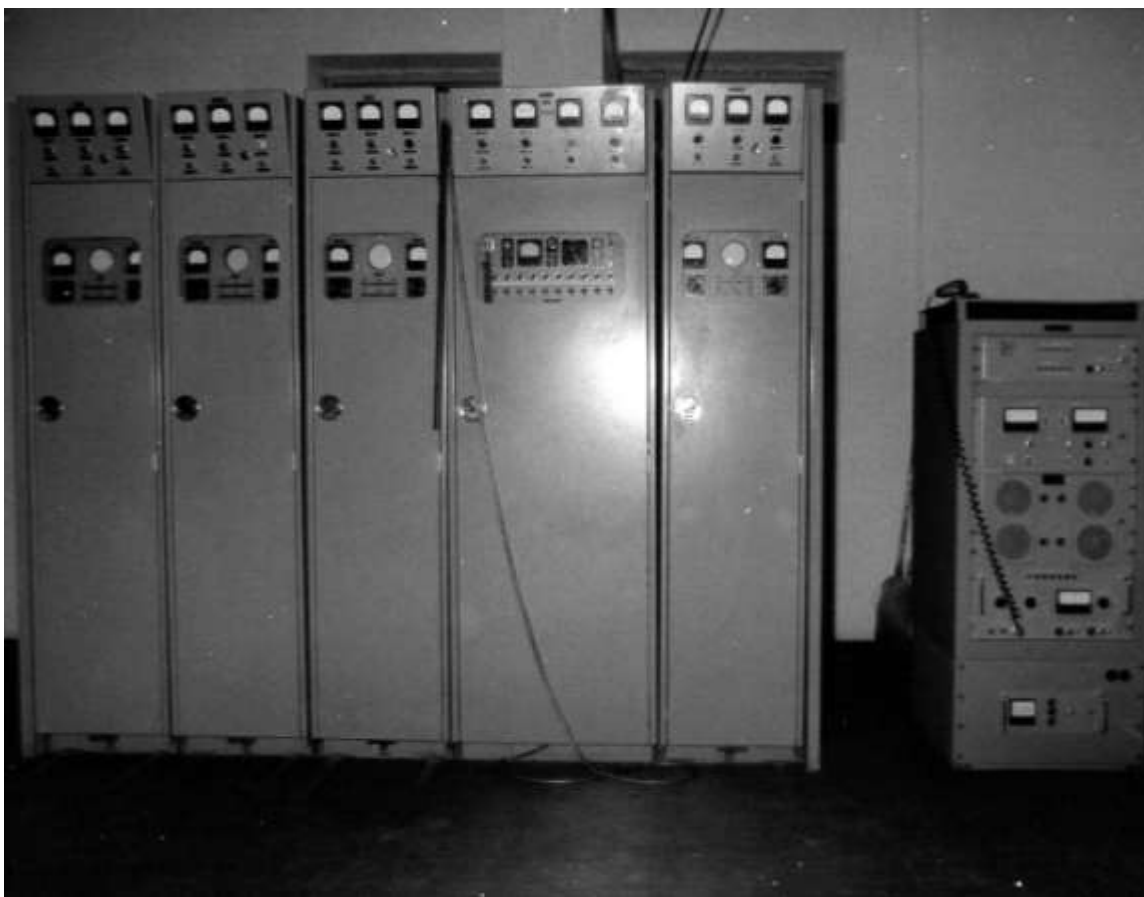
John Rae and Paul Britton

These are two views of the interior of the Transmitter Building at Pennant, Nova Scotia, on May 19th, 1980, taken from the opposite ends of the building.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the old Nautel 500 KHZ Transmitter on the left and the new Nautel 500 KHZ Transmitter on the right. A very small corner of R2D2 can be seen at the far left behind the test meter on the table, May 19th, 1980, VCS Transmitter Building, Pennant, Nova Scotia.



John Rae and Paul Britton

Left to right: Northern Electric One Kilowatt Radiotelephone Transmitter as follows: 2612, 2182, 2598, kHz, Power Supply, and 2612 kHz. The best voice we had on radiotelephone at that time was the Nautel Radiotelephone multi-channel transmitter affectionately known as Little R2D2, from the Star Wars Motion Picture.

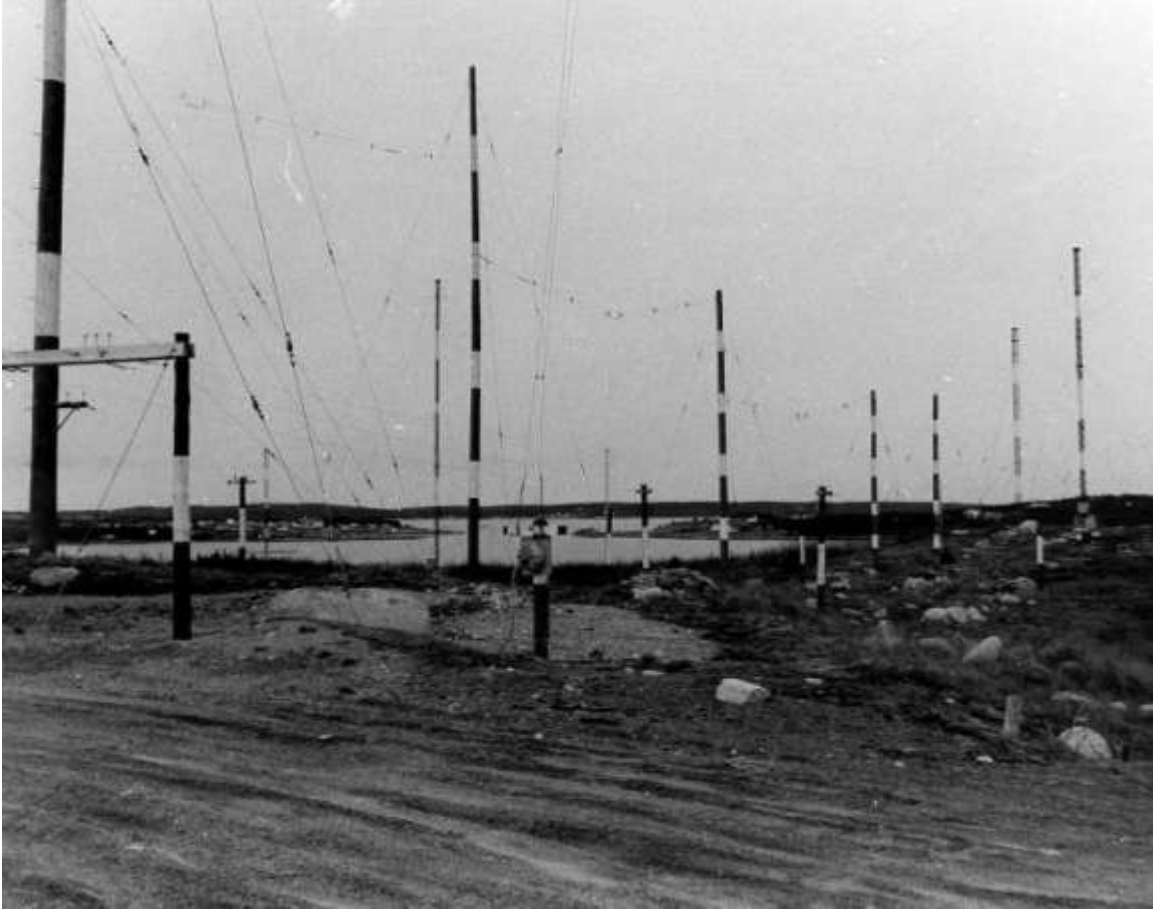


John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the interior of the Transmitter Building at Pennant, Nova Scotia on May 19th, 1980.

Left side front to back: Five kilowatt Radiotelephone Transmitters as follows: 6-mHz, 4-mHz, 8-mHz, 12-mHz and 16-mHz.

Right side front to back: One kilowatt Radiotelegraph Transmitters as follow: 4-mHz, Power Supply, 16-mHz, 16-mHz Back-up, 12-mHz, Power Supply, Back-up Radiotelegraph Transmitter (22, 12, 8, 6, and 4-mHz), 8-mHz and 6-mHz.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Transmitting Antenna Farm Halifax Coast Guard Radio VCS at Pennant, Nova Scotia on May 19th, 1980.



John Rae and Paul Britton



John Rae and Paul Britton

These are two views of the Operations Building Halifax Coast Guard Radio VCS, Ketch Harbour on May 19th, 1980. This is how the building looked from March 1970 until May 1988 and it was rather ugly. The place looked like a gravel pit with a paved driveway.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Transmitter Building Halifax Coast Guard Radio VCS at Pennant on May 19th, 1980 and it still looks much the same in 2007.

Automatic scanning receivers that improved the ability of a ship to make contact with the station were installed at this new station. The marine radiotelegraph bands were broken up into various segments for calling coast stations and segments for the actual communications between these stations and ships. Until the advent of these electronic scanning receivers, the operator had to hand-tune a receiver across these calling frequencies, listening for a call, when not engaged in communication with a ship. This had to be done on each radiotelegraph band and normally one operator was assigned to each of these bands. These bands were identified by their frequency in megahertz and were located on the harmonic that is an even multiple of the lowest frequency possible on these bands. For many years the early equipment was capable of being heard on the harmonic above the actual frequency in use, especially when in close range of the receiving station. This assignment on harmonics tended to prevent these stations from interfering with stations performing other services outside these bands. This is one reason or excuse, for a distinct call sign for the service being performed on each frequency at the stations of the British Commonwealth Communication Scheme described elsewhere. This also helped in the construction of the ship's transmitter that was often tuned to certain frequencies by a crystal of certain crystalline materials. When an alternating voltage was applied across these materials it would cause them to oscillate at the frequency the material had been cut. This frequency can then be used to tune an electronic circuit. The advantage in tuning these transmitters was that the one crystal could be used to place the transmitter on many frequencies up through the different bands by using the harmonic or multiple of this crystal frequency. The band known as the two-megahertz band was the bottom of these frequency bands, although VCS and most other stations did not monitor or communicate with ships on the two-megahertz radiotelegraph band. Therefore, you had the two, four, six, eight, twelve and sixteen, megahertz marine radiotelegraph bands. There was also a twenty-two and a twenty-five megahertz band, but those two bands for some reason were not even multiples of the two-

megahertz band. VCS could operate on the twenty-two megahertz band but was not capable of using the twenty-five megahertz band.

The automatic scanning receivers were solid state (transistor) and were designed and built here in Nova Scotia at Dartmouth. They worked well. These scanning receivers took away the job of hand scanning (tuning) the calling bands. Now all the duty operator had to do was sit back and listen to these units swing back and forth across the calling frequencies on his assigned band. When the call sign VCS was heard a switch on the scanning receiver would stop this scanning process and stay on that particular frequency in order to answer the call and obtain the calling ship's working frequency. The operator then switched from the scanning receiver to his regular receiver, while the ship's operator switched his transmitter to his working frequency. They then communicated with each other.

Each automatic scanning receiver could be heard from anywhere in the operations room, providing its speaker was turned on. The World Administrative Radio Conference, an international body that governs the world's radio communications including the assignment of frequencies to the various services, kept taking frequencies from the marine radio world to give to other services. With each new agreement from this organization it seemed as though the broadcasting service of nations like Albania received more of the available radio spectrum. These marine calling frequencies were narrowed down in order to provide more room for the working frequencies. It took us awhile to get the technicians to shorten up the sweep or frequencies these scanners covered. It was just plain frustrating when one had to listen to one of those scanners sweep back and forth over some ship transmitting a message to another coast station. The eight-megahertz band was the most popular and the interference was so severe on this calling band that it was very difficult to hear ones call quite often.

In the end the World Administrative Radio Conference, the International Telecommunication Union, and any other authority that was involved, managed to get together on this problem and they came out with a system of calling channels. A calling channel was simply one frequency. Each channel was given a number for identification. There were 18 calling channels assigned to each band of frequencies for the 4 to 16 megahertz radiotelegraph bands inclusive. There were 10 calling channels assigned to the 22-megahertz radiotelegraph band. Channels designated number 5 and 6 for the various bands between 4 and 16 megahertz became the common calling channels for these bands. Those calling channels allotted and designated number 3 and 4 became the common calling channels for the 22-megahertz band of frequencies. In other words, all the coast stations around the world monitored the two calling channels assigned to each band of frequencies. This meant that those ships that were not fitted with synthesized transmitters were capable of using this system. A synthesized transmitter was one that could transmit on any frequency and was the one that replaced the crystal-controlled transmitter. We called the crystal-controlled transmitter a rock bound transmitter. The crystal controlled or rock bound transmitter could transmit on the frequencies each of its crystals was cut or tuned only. The crystal-controlled transmitter simply made sure they had crystals for the two common channels 5 and 6 and then they could contact any station around the world. In addition to the two common calling channels a station could be assigned another calling channel or more for each band. Halifax VCS monitored the two common calling channels in each band and one additional channel. Halifax VCS monitored channel 11 for the bands between 4 and 16 megahertz and channel 8 for the 22-megahertz band. Therefore, the most interference was found on the two common channels, 5 and 6.

These first electronic scanning receivers could not be made to monitor one frequency and then another in each calling band. They had to sweep from one frequency, the bottom frequency they were assigned across all the other frequencies to the top frequency they were assigned. When Halifax VCS was assigned these calling channels these scanners were adjusted to swing over the following frequencies:

From 4181.5 kHz to 4184.5 kHz
From 8363.2 kHz to 8368.8 kHz
From 12544.8 kHz to 12553.2 kHz
From 16726.0 kHz to 16738.0 kHz

One scanner had become defective by this time and was not replaced nor repaired. It was probably used as spare parts for the others. In other words there was no scanner for the 6-megahertz band. In order to listen

to the calling channels on 6-megahertz a receiver was set on 6274.5 kHz and on the 8-kilohertz bandwidth setting. There was no scanner for the 22-megahertz band. The 22-megahertz band was hand scanned during the short periods that it was open for service.

There were eight main operating positions at the Halifax VCS station that opened in 1970. They were set alongside each other in pairs with a message belt running down between each pair. Starting at the front of the operations room and working back: There was a training position alongside the medium frequency radiotelegraph (500 kHz) position. There was a 12-megahertz radiotelegraph position alongside the medium frequency radiotelephone (2182 kHz) position. There was the 6-megahertz radiotelegraph position alongside the high seas (high frequency) radiotelephone position. And finally there was the 8-megahertz radiotelegraph position alongside the 4 and 16-megahertz radiotelegraph position.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Sable Island G.N.T. Back-up Transmitter on the left and the Five-Kilowatt Harris High Frequency Radiotelephone Transmitter on the right in the VCS Transmitter Building at Pennant on May 19th, 1980.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is David MacKinnon, VE1ALO transmitting the traffic list from VCS on May 19th, 1980, from the 500 kHz Radiotelegraph Position.



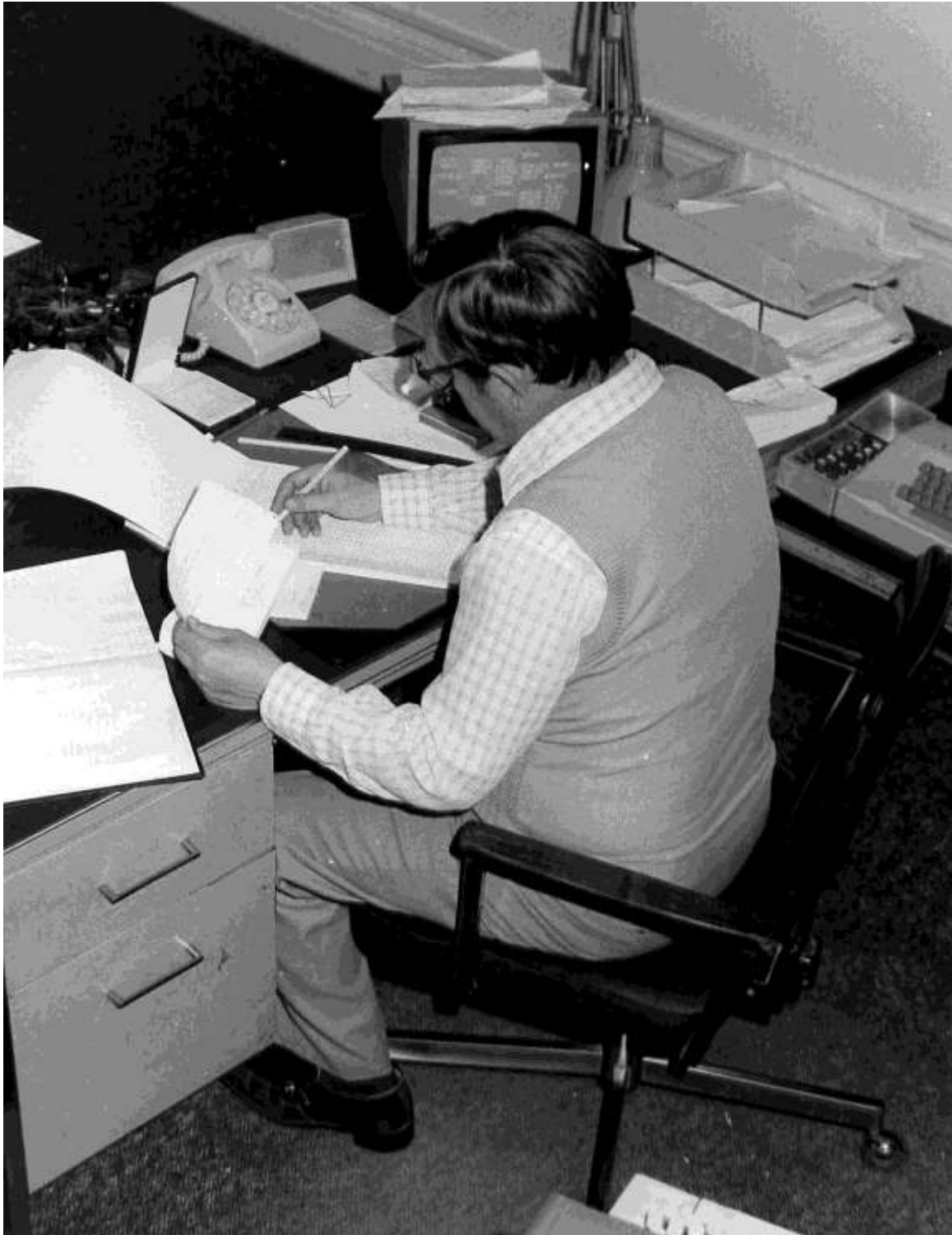
John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the late Jim Cable operating the 12-mHz Radiotelegraph Position at VCS on May 19th, 1980, with Dave MacKinnon operating the 500 KHZ Radiotelegraph Position in the background.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is David MacKinnon operating the 500 KHZ Radiotelegraph Position at VCS on May 19th, 1980. The late Bill Gillespie can be seen in the background at the Shift Supervisor's Desk. The tape in the machine on the right is a regular telex or teletype tape and that machine would transfer that tape into Morse code for the broadcasts at any speed.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is Shift Supervisor the late Bill Gillespie at the Shift Supervisor/Routing Desk VCS May 19th, 1980. Bill is checking over the daily abstract of received message traffic. The pile at his right elbow is that for a normal day or twenty-four hour period. The telephone is also connected to the speaker next to the telephone and was a "Hot Line" between all the Radio Stations, Traffic Centres, Search and Rescue, etc., around the Atlantic Provinces. The Television Screen lists the message traffic on hand that can be seen in the top tray of the basket. The small rectangular box with all the buttons below this basket was the Fanon Intercom.

Pushed next to this is the A. B. Dick keyboard for updating the Television Screens with Ship Call Signs for any Messages on hand.



Bas Carroll

This was a ceremony in the early 1970's to present the late Stan Greer and Reg Fagan with plaques for twenty-five years of service as radio operator's. In the photograph from the left to right are Stan Cairns the Senior Operations Supervisor, the late Gus Crewe the Technical Station Manager, Reg Fagan, the late Stan Greer, Bob Adams from the Regional Office, Dick Olhausen Technician and Supervisor Bas Carroll.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Operations Room Halifax Coast Guard Radio VCS, Ketch Harbour on May 19th, 1980.

Front to back on the left side:

Dave MacKinnon VE1ALO 500-kHz

The late Ted Daley VE1AIG Medium Frequency Radiotelephone

Reg Fagan High Frequency Radiotelephone

The late Mike Warden (deep into the Want Ads) on the 4-mHz and 16-mHz Radiotelegraph Position
Front to back on the right side:

The Training Position minus a Trainee

The late Jim Cable on 12-mHz Radiotelegraph

The 6-mHz position minus an operator or else the invisible operator was on duty

Dave Oldridge VE1EI on 8-mHz Radiotelegraph

The message belt was capable of conveying any piece of paper (message) to or from the front of the room to each position. A received message went up the belt and landed in a basket for that purpose. The duty communicator collected these messages and sent them on to the addressee. The communicator sent these on either a landline Teletype or on the telex network. The landline Teletype was Canadian National or Canadian Pacific Telecommunications who handled these messages at that time. The telex network was a Teletype one dialed like a regular telephone and connected to another telex machine in the office of the addressee. There was also a special machine for transmitting any weather observations direct to the weather office.

The natural environmental conditions that affect the earth's ionosphere made it necessary to change from one frequency band to another dependant on whether it was day or night. The ionosphere is that portion of the earth's atmosphere that controls radio signals throughout portions of the radio spectrum. There was ample provision made for these changes at this station. The foremost was the fact that the 4 and 16 megahertz radiotelegraph transmitters used the same power supply. When one of those frequencies was in use it was rather pointless to have the other in use. Therefore, those two frequency bands used the same power supply and were operated from the same position.

Another feature which assisted this process was that the 12 and 6 megahertz positions could be operated from either or the other. This made it possible for one operator to cover both of those bands for short periods while changing from day to night operation.

The training position contained the emergency or backup transmitter. If one of the main radiotelegraph transmitters failed, the backup transmitter was placed in service on the frequency with the failed transmitter until it was repaired. The backup transmitter had all the radiotelegraph transmit frequencies assigned to VCS with the exception of the 16-megahertz frequency. The 22-megahertz frequency was on the backup transmitter in place of the 16-megahertz frequency. When all the main transmitters were working the backup transmitter could be placed on 22-megahertz. There was no 22-megahertz scanning receiver. The only position that was feasible to monitor the 22-megahertz band was the 6-megahertz position. The 6-megahertz operator was normally so busy that it made this operation impractical.

THE OPERATIONS ROOM

HALIFAX MARINE RADIO VCS 1970 – 1975

HALIFAX COAST GUARD RADIO VCS 1975 -1988

	Communicator's Room
Routing or Supervisor's Desk	
Training	Coastal Telegraph
Backup High Frequency Transmitter	Transmitters: 500, 484 and 446 kHz
12-mHz radiotelegraph	Coastal Telephone
12874 kHz	Transmitters: 2182, 2134, 2514, 2582,

2103.5, 2612, 4394.6, 4410.1 and
2800 kHz and VHF FM

6-mHz radiotelegraph
6491.5 kHz

High Seas Telephone
All the Coastal Telephone Frequencies
plus 4410.1, 6518.8, 8787.1, 13138.0,
and 17242.2 kHz.
Continuous Marine Broadcast Unit
and the SITOR Unit.

8-mHz radiotelegraph
8440 kHz

4 and 16 mHz radiotelegraph
4285 and 16948.5 kHz

The one operator could operate or send code on all the high frequency radiotelegraph transmitters from any of the high frequency radiotelegraph positions. The 8-megahertz radiotelegraph position was open around the clock or 24 hours every day of the year and this was common with all the world's coast stations assigned an 8-mHz radiotelegraph frequency. It was the operator's job on this position to hand send the Traffic Lists on all the high frequency radiotelegraph transmitters that were in service at the traffic list time of on the hour every odd hour Greenwich Mean Time. This operator logged these lists so that the station had a record of every call sign transmitted. The 500 kHz Operator transmitted the Traffic List by hand at the same time but did not log the actual call signs transmitted. He just logged the time he transmitted his Traffic List on 484 kHz.

The 500 kHz position had three receivers; one fixed tuned to 500 kHz, the distress and calling frequency; another fixed tuned for each frequency assigned to ships on this band; the third was the main receiver and covered the medium and high frequency bands. There were two solid-state (transistor) transmitters on that position capable of transmitting on three frequencies, 500, 484, and 446 kHz. The normal procedure was to answer a ship that called on 500 kHz and then shift to the working frequencies. This was usually 480 kHz for the ship and 484 kHz for station VCS. The 446 kHz Frequency was handy for one reason or another usually when the 484 kHz Frequency was busy with a lengthy broadcast. There was a unit on this position that would transmit radiotelegraph from the paper tape made by a telex machine. I remember reading about this unit in 1958 when it was first created and thought it was the most fascinating piece of equipment I had heard of in a long time. I believe some Japanese engineers created it around that time. It made transmitting all broadcasts from the VCS station a lot easier.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Operations Room VCS on July 12th, 1977.

Left to right:

Bob Minty on 6-MHZ Radiotelegraph

Reg Fagan at Shift Supervisor's Desk

Unidentified at the end of the Message Belt

Kevin Layden on 500-KHZ

Florence Gulak on the Medium Frequency Radiotelephone Position



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is Florence Gulak operating the Medium Frequency Radiotelephone Position at VCS on July 12th, 1977. Florence was the first female operator to operate station VCS.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is David Oldridge VE1EI operating the High Seas Radiotelephone Position at VCS on May 19th, 1980. David moved back home to British Columbia when he retired and now holds call sign VA7CZ.

Every operating position in the operations room had a black and white television screen that displayed an up to date list of all messages on hand. This displayed each ship's call sign that had a message at the station awaiting delivery. One typed the call sign on the screen but had to enter it alphabetically manually. The messages were prepared for transmission and up dated on this display from the supervisor's desk at the front of the room facing these operating positions. Every position, including the technical workshop below the operations room, was connected to the supervisor's desk by an intercom. Ordinary classroom blackboards were mounted on the wall at the front of the operations room for the radiotelephone traffic list and various pieces of information often required for the efficient operation of the station.

The medium frequency radiotelephone (2182 kHz) position as it was known, the coastal radiotelephone service for ships around one hundred miles from the station, was much the same as the one known as the High Seas or high frequency radiotelephone position. That position contained a number of fixed tuned modules that selected various channels so that the duty operator on that position could handle most of the duplex telephone calls between ship and shore. This position created the most noise in the operations room from the type and frequencies that had to be monitored. The duty operator also guarded the 2182 kHz distress and calling frequency and the channel sixteen VHF (156.8-mHz) calling frequency continuously. This operator did all the radiotelephone broadcasts including the twice-daily schedule with ten lighthouses strung along the coast and monitored six radio beacons along the coast twice each day. The radio beacons were for ships to use with their direction finders in order to ascertain their position at sea. This position had a distress tone generator that made a good racket on 2182 kHz in order to alert ships that a distress incident had taken place.

The High Seas or high frequency radiotelephone position contained fixed tuned modules and was capable of operating all the frequencies on the medium frequency position. This position had one high frequency channel assigned to it for each of the high seas radiotelephone bands, again the four, six, eight, twelve, and sixteen-megahertz bands. The duty operator on this position could handle duplex telephone calls to anywhere around the world, via the two-megahertz through to the very high frequency bands assigned to ships and coastal stations for that purpose. For example: a yacht in Halifax harbour using a very high frequency radiotelephone, a cargo vessel off Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, using a medium frequency radiotelephone, or a passenger liner in the West Indies using a high frequency radiotelephone, could all make a telephone call to anywhere in the world via this position. This position also had a telephone that could be connected to the Sable Island radiotelephone module and provide close to normal telephone service for the dozen living residents of Canada's Graveyard of the Atlantic. This was their only communication with the outside world at that time. The operator on that position was also responsible for the efficient operation of a Continuous Marine Broadcast on very high frequency channel 21 (161.65 MHz). This was a unit that continuously played taped recordings of the latest weather and notices to shipping (mariners) broadcasts. This unit appeared at the station in the early 1980's and used tapes called cassette tapes that were very popular at the time.



Joan Roscoe

This is S. G. "Spud" Roscoe VE1BC on the 8-mHz position at VCS in June 1983.

I fully intended to record an accurate description of each piece of equipment making up the VCS station at that time. My description of this detail became rather hopeless. When I had no more than completed a description for each position, I would go to work to find that a piece of equipment had been replaced by something quite different. This is the best I can do and is the equipment at the station about 1980.

Every position in the operations room had a Fanon FI-13 Intercom, an Electrohome EVM-11R Video Monitor, and a typewriter with a continuous belt of three-ply paper, for logging. Each of the radiotelegraph positions had an ordinary hand telegraph key for the transmission of radiotelegraph. These positions also had provision for the use of any telegraph key and the majority of the operators used their own personal semi-automatic bugs. The station issued each operator on joining the station's staff one radiotelegraph headset and one radiotelephone headset complete with microphone.

Medium Frequency Radiotelegraph (500 kHz) Position:

All frequencies are in kilohertz.

VCS	SHIP
	512
500	500
484	480
	468
446	454
	425

The two VCS transmitters were five hundred-watt solid-state Nautels, manufactured in Nova Scotia by the Nautel Electronics Company. These transmitters were located at the transmitter site at Pennant. Both transmitters had all three frequencies and were capable of either continuous wave A1 or modulated continuous wave A2 emissions. One receiver was the Measurement Engineering fix-tuned to 500 kHz so that there was a continuous listening watch on that frequency. This receiver could be heard by any operator nearby. One receiver was an ITT Mackay 3021A Digital for general coverage use. The third and final receiver was the TMC Model VLRE crystal-tuned to all the ship frequencies listed above. It should be noted that TMC stood for Technical Materials Corporation and that Douglas Carroll, the Navy Lieutenant who was awarded the M.B.E. for putting CFH on the air in 1943, was instrumental, after he retired from the Navy, in forming a Canadian branch of this American Company.

Each of the high frequency radiotelegraph positions operated one or two of these frequencies. All frequencies are in kilohertz.

VCS	SHIP
4285	
6491.5	
8440	Various on all bands
12874	
16948.5	
22387	

Each high frequency radiotelegraph position had the same equipment. One Canadian built Northern Electric Type CRC/C-2 FRT one kilowatt transmitter. The transmitter was located at the transmitter site at Pennant so the unit at the position was a control unit for the transmitter. One EMI Cossar Scanning Receiver manufactured by the Cossar Company at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and one receiver the ITT Mackay 3021A Digital Receiver for general coverage. These Mackay receivers replaced the Plessey FR155 general coverage receivers that were held as spares. The technicians could replace a Mackay temporarily with a Plessey for routine maintenance.

Medium Frequency (2182 kHz) Radiotelephone and the High Seas or High Frequency Radiotelephone Operating Positions.

All frequencies in megahertz (VHF)

International Channel	VCS	Ship or other station
16	156.8	156.8
19A	156.95	156.95

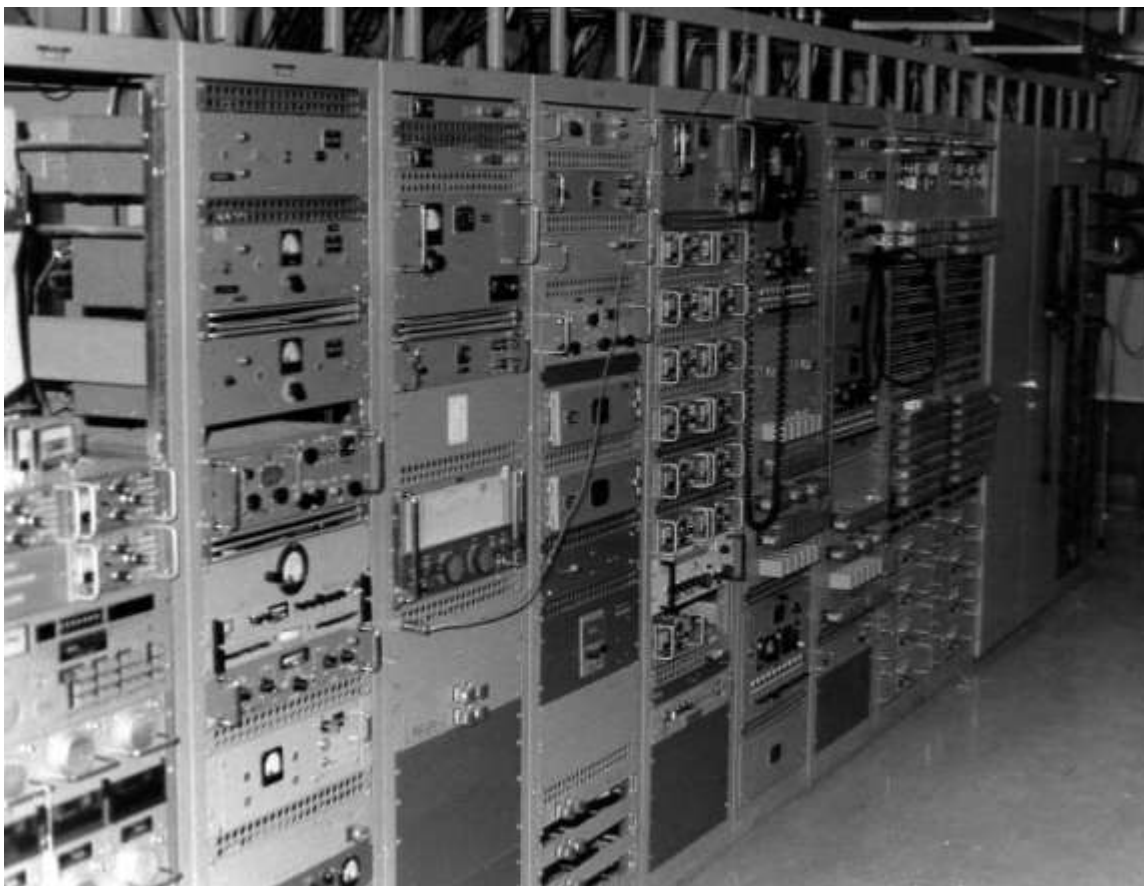
21	161.65	None
22	157.10	157.10
26	161.90	157.30

All frequencies in kilohertz (MF & HF)

	2134	2134
	2182	2182
	2612	1792
	2514	2206
	2598	None
413	4394.6	4100.2
418	4410.1	4115.7
605	6518.8	6212.4
823	8787.1	8263.2
1213	13138.0	12367.2
1604	17242.2	16469.3

The VHF equipment was from the American General Electric Company or the British Pye Company. The VHF equipment was located in the basement of the station's operations building at Ketch Harbour. The VHF channels 19 and 22 were for communications with the Coast Guard ships, helicopters, or vehicles. There was a VHF British made Racal Telephone Converter for connecting stations on those channels to the regular telephone lines for communications direct to the various Coast Guard offices. This unit was so seldom used that it never worked. The technicians would repair it immediately but when it was required a year or so later it was defective again.

I was unable to obtain the actual frequency of the Lighthouse VHF radio. This unit had an automatic call system and gave good clear communications with a number of the Lighthouses in the area.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Equipment Room VCS, Ketch Harbour on May 19th, 1980

The MF and HF frequencies each had a Marconi XH14 or a Plessey type CRA/R-1001/FRR Receiver, both British located in the basement of the operations building. These were fed to the modules on each of the two positions. Most of the frequencies in use on both positions could be operated from either position. There were three transmitters available for the frequencies from 2134 to 4394.6 kHz. One a one-kilowatt Nautel built here in Nova Scotia and two, one-kilowatt Northern Electrics manufactured in Ontario. All three were capable of transmitting in either the old audio modulation mode or the newer upper side band mode. There were two receivers on the distress and calling frequency of 2182 kilohertz and an ITT Mackay 3020A step-tuned receiver for general coverage on both operating positions. The Mackay receivers replaced a British built Eddystone receiver. The Eddystone was a much cheaper receiver and it showed in the general operation of the unit. Many of the operators used the ITT Mackay receiver for all contacts because it was a better receiver than the fixed tuned units. There were two transmitters available for the frequencies from 4410.1 kHz through to 17242.2 kHz. One was a new five-kilowatt R. F. Harris manufactured in New York and the other a standard Northern Electric similar to the other Northern Electric transmitters.

A brief description of each of these channels is necessary to help understand that portion of the station. Channel 16 was the VHF calling frequency in order for a station anywhere in the world could contact another station then shift to a working channel for communications. Naturally the range on that channel was limited to a few miles but from this assignment all ships had the same channel for calling another station, ship or shore. Channel 19 and 22 were mainly for communications with our Coast Guard as stated. Channel 21 was the broadcast channel for this band, the VHF band of marine frequencies. The Continuous Marine Broadcast (CMB) unit broadcast continuously on that channel. Channel 26 was the normal duplex channel that handled the duplex telephone connections to anywhere in the world via the regular telephone system.

Frequency 2134 kHz was an inter-ship channel for fishing vessels. Many fishing vessels, especially those not fitted with their own company channel, monitored this channel only. For this reason we were given this channel in order to announce storm warnings and important broadcasts so that these vessels would have no excuse for missing a broadcast. 2182 kHz was the distress and calling frequency for that band for anywhere around the world. That was the frequency we handled the majority of the distress communications handled by the station.

2318 and 2800 kHz was the channel to communicate with the residents of Sable Island. The transmitter on that frequency was fixed to that frequency and there was a backup transmitter. Both transmitters were controlled from the training position.

2612 and 1792 kHz was the medium frequency Lighthouse channel. We had a contact with each lighthouse around the coast twice a day on that channel.

2118 and 2514 kHz and 2206 and 2582 kHz were the two channels we used to handle all communications with ships on that band, including many duplex telephone calls. This had been changed to 2118-2514 from 2530-2815 kHz, the old channel used for communication with the National Sea Products Fleet. We tried to get our customers to use this new 2118-2514 channel because so many of the stations around the coast used the 2206-2582 kHz it created a lot of interference. It was amazing the number of Canadian vessels that were "Rock Bound" – crystal tuned – to that 2206-2582 kHz channel and could not use 2118-2514 kHz.

With the flexibility of the ITT Mackay receiver we were able to work any ship on any frequency providing they were able to receive us on one of our frequencies. Many foreign vessels did not have our frequencies and many insisted on transmitting on 2049 kHz. With this Mackay receiver we could communicate while they listened to our 2514 or 2582 kHz frequency. Sometimes they actually listened to us on their radio direction finder while transmitting on their crystal-tuned radiotelephone.

The 2598 kHz frequency was the broadcast frequency. We did weather, notice to shipping, and whatever that needed to be broadcast each day on this frequency. I saw fishing vessel's leave this frequency tuned in on full volume while alongside a dock in order to get the latest forecast.

International Channels 413 through to 1604 were known, at least by Canadian Officialdom, as the High Seas Radiotelephone Service and I wonder what desk bound Admiral created that title. The old terminology of Short Wave Service or the more modern terminology of High Frequency Service would have sounded better.

The Supervisor's Desk or Routing Desk had the AB DICK 995 keyboard for operation of the Video Monitors. The Sync Generator for this unit was located in the basement of the operations building. The main operating unit of the Fanon FI-13 intercom to each position including the technical workshop and equipment room in the basement was on this position. All messages on hand for delivery to various ships and stations were held in a basket on this position. A British Racal Electronic Radiotelegraph keyer was located on a table in front of this supervisor's desk. This unit continuously keyed the high frequency radiotelegraph transmitters with the appropriate frequencies that were in use, the frequency the radio Teletype (SITOR) was tuned and a solicitation for any AMVER or OBS messages a ship might have to transmit.

This electronic radiotelegraph unit replaced the old GNT tape machine left over from World War II that used to key all the transmitters. This World War II unit cut a paper tape that would transmit radiotelegraph. The typewriter style unit that cut the tape was located in the operations building basement and this unit keyed the transmitters from there. A tape was cut with the desired information and the ends of the tape were scotch taped together to make a continuous belt. There were usually several of these belts hanging over a piece of equipment that had the information on the tape written on it in pen. If one was lucky when they went to change the information transmitted, they could use a previous tape and not have to cut a new one. During the war these units were used to send high-speed radiotelegraph. The radiotelegraph was copied on an ink tape recorder. This tape simply copied the characters of the Morse code. This tape was fed

through a steel bar built to hold it so one could watch it and transcribe the code onto a standard typewriter. One controlled the speed of the tape with a foot switch similar to the foot switch that operated an electric sewing machine. I spent many hours transcribing this code that had been received at 300 words per minute or faster at one of the first stations I operated. It was amazing how good one could get at reading these tapes and could transcribe the code nearly as fast as one could type.

The information these units transmitted needs an explanation. SITOR was an acronym for Ship Telex Over Radio. It was the first attempt to connect a telex machine ashore with a telex machine in a ship. The result was the most frustrating piece of junk anyone tried to operate. In the end the Federal Communications Commission turned it over to the Amateur Radio community to see if they could make it work. The Amateur Radio world has created most of the electronics we take for granted today. They called theirs AMTOR that meant Amateur Telex Over Radio. This improved it considerably but thank God the Satcom or Satellite Communications replaced it.

We did broadcasts on the SITOR. A friend who had been in the radio room of a foreign ship said one would not believe the mess he saw. The Radio Officer in this ship had left this machine on and there was teletype paper piled up behind it. This pile of paper was so deep no one could ever read it. It was a copy of all our broadcasts for several days. I presume this Radio Officer felt he might get a call from some office ashore on their telex machine and left it on for that reason. He was not making any use of our broadcasts that is for certain. Towards the end and just before the station closed this machine did receive some use from those who knew how to operate it at sea. It would appear that the amateur radio community had managed some realistic changes.

AMVER meant Automated Merchant Vessel Report that was controlled by the United States Coast Guard. They kept an up to date position report on any and all vessels that wanted to participate. That was a big help in trying to assist a vessel that desired assistance in one form or another. If someone radioed for help the Coast Guard would advise the nearest vessel they had on file that could be of assistance.

OBS was the abbreviation for a weather observation message. Many ships recorded the actual weather they were experiencing several times each day and would forward this information to the various international weather organizations. Most ships transmitted more of those messages than any other type of message. Actually many ships transmitted very little other than those weather observations.

Hopefully this brief description of the actual equipment in use at the VCS station at that time makes sense and is of some interest. This description is of the station just prior to moving into a new operations room in May 1988 with computers for each operating position. The station was an excellent place to test any new equipment. The station often had a piece for that purpose only. The equipment had to be the best available in order to tolerate the continuous hard use.

The VCS station was one of the better stations of the many I operated over the years. The operators on the whole were an easy bunch with which to work. The job required shift work of course but because of the size of the station there were several shift plans available. I preferred the plan that contained two evenings, short change, two days, short change and one night. This was followed by two or three days off but of course someone created enough of a fuss that we lost that plan and most of the others in order to work several of the three shifts at one time. There was plenty of overtime if one wanted it and the odd overtime cheque kept your friendly banker happy.

The various operating positions or circuits were assigned on a rotational basis and this lasted until the station closed in 1996. Each operator put in four hours on each position as follows: if you had two evening shifts you had a choice on a first then first serve basis of the positions left vacant by the operators who finished their evening shifts the evening before. You took your choice of those available and put in four hours on the following rotation:

500 kHz to High Frequency Radiotelephone and SITOR
Medium Frequency Radiotelephone to 12-mHz radiotelegraph
8-mHz radiotelegraph to 6-mHz radiotelegraph

6-mHz radiotelegraph to 4 and 16-mHz radiotelegraph
4 and 16 radiotelegraph to Medium Frequency Radiotelephone
12-mHz radiotelegraph to Routing Desk
Routing Desk to 500 kHz
High Frequency Radiotelephone and SITOR to 8-mHz radiotelegraph

If any position was not open for one reason or another you simply by-passed it. The Routing Desk was the Supervisor's Desk and involved the updating of any message traffic and the traffic list. This was the first position eliminated for the want of an operator. If for some reason there was a shortage of operators the High Frequency Radiotelephone position was the first operating position to close. The 4 and 16-mHz was the next target but it was rare that the station got that short staffed. When it came to that the offices were raided for a supervisor to fill in.

The three duty operators and the communicator had the building to themselves on night shift. The technicians terminated their night shifts in the early 1980's and only worked day shift or the occasional evening after that. I no longer remember why. The supervisors did not work nights for awhile but I no longer remember why. There had to be 3 operators on duty to justify a supervisor and this was the reason for the overtime more than any real shortage of operators or any need for extra operators. I would not want to know the total hours I spent on duty and did absolutely nothing. The three night shift operators were split up with one on 500 kHz, one on Medium Frequency Radiotelephone and the other on 8-mHz radiotelegraph. They followed the normal four-hour watch on each position scheme.



John Rae and Paul Britton



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is two views of Communicator Joy Horlick on duty in the Communicator's Room at VCS on May 19th, 1980. One can see a bit of Supervisor Bill Gillespie sitting at the supervisor's desk.

The Teletype equipment was located in the communicator's room which was just off the main operations room at the supervisor's desk, and the equipment was operated by around five staff members trained for that job only. The equipment was one radio-teletype receive only from Sable Island for their many weather reports and message traffic, and one teletype for the Meteorological Teletype Data Network across the

country including portions of the United States. Three regular telex machines and one computer operated teletype. The latter was a real labour savor. A message was placed on a television screen then at the push of a button took off to its destination leaving a printed copy. This would also deliver traffic to the station in much the same fashion. When the landline telegraph was replaced by teletype equipment in 1956 it was decided that a proper communications staff for this purpose would be necessary with the continued increase in message traffic.

I wanted to give a brief resume of each of the station's staff but my notes became as hopeless as trying to keep up with the equipment changes. The majority of the communicators were former military personnel like so many of the operators and technicians. Once in awhile a radio operator would go in the communicator's room and give them a hand or fill in when short staffed. There were 28 radio operators, 5 communicators and over 10 technicians and at least 5 supervisors. Several were mentioned elsewhere on these pages and that is the best I can do.

The main floor of the operations building at Ketch Harbour contained the main operations room, the communicator's room, plus three offices, two washrooms, a kitchen, and cloakroom. The cloakroom had a small locker for each operator that they could lock and hold a few personal effects. The kitchen contained stove, microwave oven, refrigerator, cupboards, sink, dishes and anything one would need for a banquet, including a soft drink machine for cold drinks.

I was working the 8-mHz radiotelegraph position one afternoon a year or so before this operations room closed. I acknowledged receipt for a message transmitted by some ship's radio officer. This officer then asked me what was wrong with the guy on 12-mHz radiotelegraph. He said he had called for over a half hour and got no answer. I looked up and could see this guy was in fine shape but answered his question. I simply said I do not know but will check. If this guy is asleep I will wake him and if he is dead I will cart him off to the cemetery. I then went back to work and completely forgot the incident. I did not want to get involved in anything and by this time I was getting pretty well fed up with everything in general. I had just completed a good comparison of what we had in Canada with the other ships around the world and was not the least impressed with what I found. A few days later Supervisor Dave MacKinnon came out of the office laughing and said I guess you told him. I said who did I tell what, and he repeated the above incident.

At that time IBM (International Business Machines) sold a variety of recording equipment. One of these units was a large reel to reel tape recorder that would record for a period of 24 hours. Many organizations had purchased these units to record everything that was said over a telephone, radio and nearly anything else. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was using one here in Halifax to record everything they did. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police was another organization that used this equipment and we had recently had one installed in our equipment room. We changed the tapes each morning at the start of the day shift. This thing recorded everything in the building: the telephones, each radio operating-position and may have recorded each time the toilets flushed for all I know. We did not pay any attention to it and simply called it Big Brother. It would have been handy if any argument had taken place over a distress incident of some description and for this reason the tape was held when one occurred. The recordings were not the best in quality but did provide a good record.

Dave MacKinnon had been assigned to monitor these tapes. Can you imagine the work it took for him to find that one entry not knowing it was on there? It did have a means of finding a certain item at a certain time if you wanted something and knew at what time it took place and on what piece of equipment. It makes one wonder why they were so foolish to waste such a good life at such foolishness. At times I ask myself why I wasted my time at that when there was so much I could have done for a living.

The old signal station and radio station site at Camperdown was put up for sale and the tender for this sale closed on October 14th, 1986. This sale included 13 acres of land and at least one house. Douglas Garrison from Sambro was the successful bidder and purchased the site. He turned the site into a housing subdivision. He named the only street Jacquelon Purcell Drive after his wife. She has been Jackie Garrison a lot longer than she was a Purcell and it is rather a shame when one thinks of all the history it could have been named after. No one cares nor is interested and within a short time no one will have any desire to be

reminded of this history. There may at some future date be a magazine article on this history that few will bother to read.

NOTICES BROADCASTED BY CANADIAN COAST STATIONS

Notice to Shipping was strictly a Canadian concoction. They were known as Notice to Mariners everywhere else around the world. The latter term in Canada meant the same thing, except the Notice to Shipping was broadcast over the air and the Notice to Mariners was transmitted via the regular mail service. To add further mystery to these they were abbreviated to NOTSHIP and NOTMAR. This was but two of these typical labels we had hung on to various things. A Notice to Airmen was known as a NOTAM. MAFOR broke down to Marine Forecasts. The powers that be came up with another in the form of a NOTFISH. No, we did not master the art of talking to fish although at times you wonder. This one meant a Notice to Fishermen. One of the operators, while looking over these notices, stated that before long we would broadcast a NOTIT. Further inquiries revealed that a NO TIT would be a notice to Italians. Hopefully his prophecy did not come true because it would be an insult to most of the Italian girls I ever met. The federal government controls and operates the communications in this country. You would have had to live with it in order to believe it. The late Captain Robert T. Lucky called me aside one day while I was sailing as his Radio Officer and gave me a royal tongue lashing for copying these broadcasts. He claimed he was not paying me to copy such foolishness and that the pilot, on joining the vessel, had all the information that was necessary.

About 1956 the province of Nova Scotia constructed a causeway across the Canso Strait, the body of water that separates Cape Breton Island from the rest of the province. Shortly after this was constructed a small freighter was passing through the strait at night. Apparently the crew was sailing along enjoying the pretty lights ahead with an out of date chart, and ran smack into the causeway. When all the dust settled, I was told that they blamed this accident on the radio operator for failing to provide the Captain with the latest Notices to Mariners. This was the only thing I could think of in my favour for arguing my point with Captain Lucky. I also had to agree with him – because he took my freshly copied broadcast and went over to the chart table. He took a NOTSHIP I had just copied and pulled out the appropriate chart. I had been over five minutes copying just that one and it pertained to a wharf that only had about five feet of water around it for as many miles. There was no chance of any operator-equipped vessel going near it.

These broadcasts that took over an hour to copy could have been condensed to at least ten minutes. The powers that be could have got everything necessary in such a short broadcast, and if there was anything that involved a ship it could have called in for further information. I continued to copy these broadcasts, but was rather worried for awhile. If Captain Lucky had insisted that I terminate the practice, there would never have been a hope in hell of my getting any help from some office ashore. He never mentioned them again and I continued to copy them while at sea. I copied them from one ship or another for years, but can only remember one that had anything to do with us. Needless to say I had some fun with it. This was one I copied from station VCS as we were passing up along the Nova Scotia coast on our way back from somewhere down south. This particular broadcast was over one hour long and for awhile I thought it would never end. The NOTSHIP involving us was one that indicated we would be sailing through the area of a naval exercise the next day. The late Captain J. A. Blinn was in command this particular time and when the broadcast terminated he was on the bridge. I went into the chart room, checked the chart and could see he had our course laid out to pass through the middle of this area, so I brought this to his attention. Naturally he went on about how the Navy did not own the ocean and they weren't going to push him around. I went away chuckling to myself and thinking we'll see. The next morning I ran up to the chart room before breakfast for a quick peek. He had redrawn our course towards the outside of this area, but still well within the limits. Right after breakfast it became rather interesting. Three Canadian destroyers came up on the horizon and sat there watching us as Captain Blinn ordered a ten-degree course change to take us a little farther out of their way. This was before the big leap in oil prices and container ships were racing back and forth across the pond (Atlantic) in excess of thirty knots (they have since slowed down to around twenty to conserve fuel). A large German containership was racing up our port side a few feet farther inside this area, looking more like a destroyer than a merchant ship. She had white water flying off both sides of her bow like a naval ship rather than a merchant ship that rarely goes anywhere fast enough to make white water.

The Captain of this containership must have been playing the stubborn bit as well, but was not long in swinging over next to us out of the Navy's way. These three destroyers were right sassy looking, and after watching us for a few minutes they turned as one unit and went back out of sight, as much as to say "there, after this do as you're damn well told".



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is Radio Operator Kevin Layden monitoring the NOTSHIP Broadcast Transmitted from station VCS on July 12th, 1977. The unit to his right is doing the actual Morse Code Transmission and the Telex Tape can be seen lying on the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPANY RADIOTELEPHONE

During the 1970's a new federal government department was formed known as the Department of Communications, and all the inspection, policing, and examination duties were transferred from the Ministry of Transport to this new department. The Ministry of Transport was the terminology for the old Department of Transport. About that same time licences became available for companies who were qualified or in a position to make use of high frequency single-side-band communications direct from their offices to the vessels with which they had a need to communicate. Several of these companies then installed this equipment and one of the first to make use of it was National Sea Products Limited. This terminated the daily schedules via duplex and meant that VCS lost a good portion of its history. After that we received an occasional call only from one of their vessels. The rare contact we had was when a crewmember wanted to talk to someone at home or the Captain had business he could not conduct via the company radiotelephone. This meant no reduction in the amount of radiotelephone traffic handled at VCS because so many boats of all descriptions had radiotelephone equipment and this traffic seemed to increase continually. The station got the odd duplex call from an aircraft.

CANADIAN COAST GUARD RADIO HALIFAX VCS

Halifax Marine Radio VCS became Canadian Coast Guard Radio Halifax VCS on October 1st, 1975, along with every other marine radio station in Canada. VCS at this time would average twelve thousand contacts per month and as of June 26th, 1979 the operators on these coastal stations became part of the Canadian Coast Guard. All these stations were in the process of becoming separate coast stations again. The Aeradio Operator and the Marine Operator were a distinct species again, and the Aeradio Operator had a new label – Flight Service Specialist.

This new Halifax Coast Guard label for station VCS took a while to feel at home and did not feel comfortable until the International Telecommunication Union publications were changed accordingly. Many of the operators in the ships stated they did not want the Coast Guard, and only wanted to make a telephone call. Many had arranged these calls via radiotelegraph and did not answer the operator on radiotelephone, but went to the trouble of going back in radiotelegraph to make this statement. I felt the main reason for the new label was to try and benefit from the publicity surrounding the United States Coast Guard. The VCS station had only one fault that could be broken down into two parts. Canada did not have a large merchant fleet and much of the little Canada had wandered around wherever it pleased without a proper Radio Officer as required by international law. Therefore the station did not have a large merchant fleet in order to design the station around. And the second part is rather obvious. The station did not have experienced radio operators from this fleet to operate the station. The VCS station did a commendable job and the lack of this fleet only created a lot of petty foolishness that had to be overlooked or possibly understood is the better terminology. The unnecessary and over use of acronyms is but one of these faults. This was easily understood after listening to our illustrious leaders address to each other. They used these same acronyms to the point that they sounded like a few cans of alphabet soup chatting among them selves. There was no room for these acronyms in that type of communications for two reasons. The first was the fact we had to spend time in explaining them to the English speaking users and the second that was worse, is that the foreign speaking users were unable to break the acronyms down in an English-Native language dictionary. Having had to translate from one language to another over the years I can find nothing humorous in the many incidents that were created from this unnecessary habit. For example, a Japanese vessel was told to report ASAP Sydney and ASAP meant as soon as possible to his agent in Sydney. After the Japanese crew translated this English message into Japanese, formed their reply, and translated this into English; you guessed it – we received a message addressed ASAP Sydney, thinking ASAP was a registered telegraphic address. When you consider twelve thousand contacts made each month it was a mystery more such errors were not made. The one we wasted more time on than all the others was ECAREG CANADA. That was the address for a multitude of sins and had to be used by all ships in order to obtain a clearance in order to enter the territorial waters of eastern Canada through the vessel traffic management centres of the Canadian Coast Guard. It broke down to Eastern Canada Regulatory Area, but would have been much easier and better etiquette on our part if it were simply Coast Guard Halifax.

Another bit of petty foolishness that irked me was the way we made the weather broadcasts. The VCS station was assigned certain areas to broadcast the weather and instead of broadcasting the complete list when one of these areas was included with another area, they simply omitted the other areas in the same broadcast. When station VAR Saint John, New Brunswick closed the only station that made the Bay of Fundy broadcast was VAU Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. One could not hear this in Minas Basin, but the VCS Halifax broadcast was loud and clear. We would copy the VCS broadcast and then add the Bay of Fundy to the one that looked appropriate. Trying to get this changed was a complete waste of time. This also applied to the morning broadcast from VCS while heading up along the coast towards Sydney. You ran out of the VCS broadcast before you could hear the VCO Sydney broadcast. Each station should have done a complete forecast broadcast of the Maritime region. And the stations next to Newfoundland should have done both, a complete broadcast of both the Maritimes and Newfoundland areas, and so on around the coast. Actually it was petty foolishness because after the coast was saturated with the Continuous Marine Broadcasts on VHF FM, that was more than sufficient for the coastal weather broadcasts. Each coast station should have done a broadcast of the Western North Atlantic Gale Warnings and the Technical Synopsis from the Canadian weather office only.

This was all petty foolishness because there was such a wall of pure ignorance in charge. One time the Navy was having an exercise and wanted a broadcast to all Canadian Merchant Ships. I set this up the proper way: VGGG VGGG VGGG de VCS VCS VCS and came back on duty to find it going out as CQ CQ CQ de VCS VCS VCS because someone complained it was too long. I can just picture the foreign operator taking this into his captain who would translate it into his language, whatever it was, and then give his operator hell for wasting time in copying it.

There were many things that could have been done at the station to help the operator at sea that would have said we know you're there and we are trying to help, but one could not get through this wall of ignorance in order to say just that. It was amazing how the lotto tickets got around. I had an American ship request the numbers in a recent draw one time. For the little time it took to transmit them after a weather broadcast would have been plain good will on our part.

To generate good will to those in ships, the VCS station could have advertised all weather systems of gale strength or higher on the high frequency automatic radiotelegraph marking transmissions. This was the automatic tape that indicated the high frequency radiotelegraph frequencies in use and solicited OBS and AMVER messages. These weather systems or storms could have been abbreviated to a few groups as follows:

GALE 081600Z 48N56W NNE 2 KTS
HURRICANE ALICE 211200Z 40N62W N 5 MPH
TROPICAL STORM DAVID 310600Z 32N30W STATIONARY

There were very few storms of this nature in the area at any time. They could have been taken from the Western North Atlantic Warnings that were delivered to the station continually. It would have been very rare to have to transmit two of the above warnings and the most of the time there would have been none at all. This would have meant so much for those at sea and would have given station VCS a very good reputation for those at sea. As it was I am sure some of the operators at sea had a good giggle over the foolishness that took place if nothing else.

ECAREG CANADA

On February 4th, 1970, the Liberian tanker ARROW with international call sign 5LHI grounded on Cerabus Rock in Chedabucto Bay, Nova Scotia. This created a severe oil spill that took some time to clean up. This incident prompted the Canadian government to create another empire; one of marine traffic centres around the country, to control the movement of all ships traversing the areas of these various traffic-zones as they were known. The controlling organization for eastern Canada was known as the Eastern Canada Regulatory Area, a part of the Canadian Coast Guard Traffic Centre, and naturally this was abbreviated to ECAREG CANADA which became their telegraphic address.



Warren E. Hagar

The ARROW was not the first vessel lost on Cerabus Rock. There had been many vessels lost on this rock and this is the SPICA that struck in the same spot as ARROW and became a total loss. Unfortunately Warren did not supply the date this one was lost.

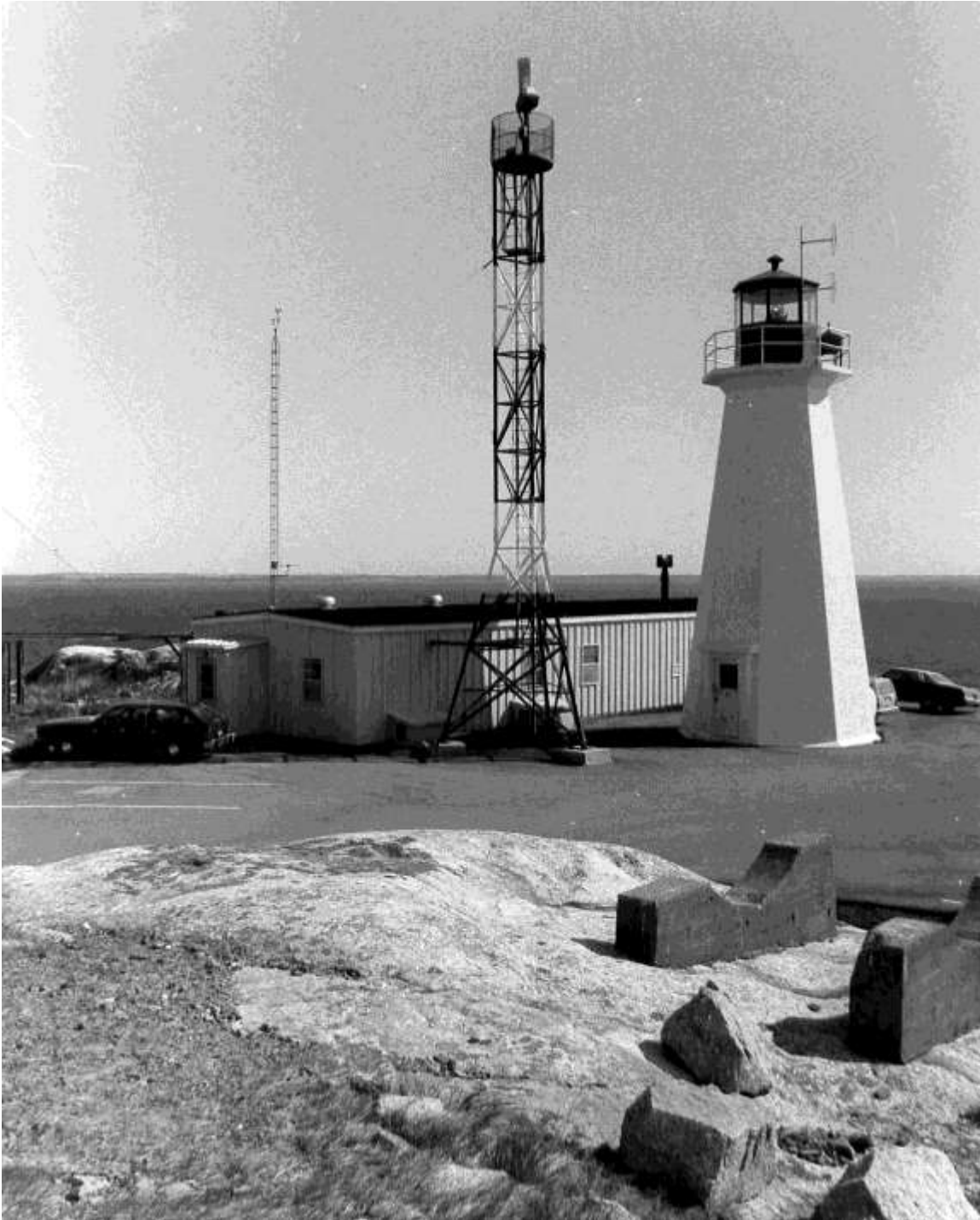
A site chosen for one of these Vessel Traffic Management stations was the old Chebucto Head Direction Finder site that first opened as station VAV in 1917. This station opened on October 6th, 1972, and was officially known over the radio as Halifax Traffic. The call sign of this station was VBJ20. There was no radiotelegraph service at any of the VTM (Vessel Traffic Management) stations and most of their communications was conducted over the VHF FM radiotelephone channels. Each station was equipped with a small ship's type two-megahertz radiotelephone for use with vessels that for some reason could not communicate on the VHF channels.



John Rae and Paul Britton



John Rae and Paul Britton



John Rae and Paul Britton

These are three views of Vessel Traffic Management Station VBJ20 "Halifax Traffic" and the Chebucto Head Lighthouse on May 19th, 1980. I am member number 1052 of the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society and for you members this is number CAN-133.



NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

VE1BC

S. G. "Spud" Roscoe



TO RADIO : _____

DAY	MONTH	YEAR	UTC
RST	BAND	MODE	PSE QSL
			TNX QSL

printed by www.qslcanada.com

QTH _____

This is the vehicle you made contact with at the above noted location. The antenna is a Comrod AT82, 50C 50237 Smartuner and the rig is a 50 watt Ten Tec Beast via solar powered batteries. The battery room is the little door in front of the wheels. The yellow power cord assists charging the batteries when available. Everything operates on 12V or propane.

This is the front and back of one of my amateur radio QSL cards and is the vehicle I take around to the lighthouses and operate radio.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is the Operations Room of "Halifax Traffic" on May 19th, 1980

In a way this station was nothing more than a more modern version of what was first opened in 1917. The fully automatic radio direction finder at this station covered the VHF channels only. When a ship was heard on this direction finder the bearing was displayed automatically on a digital display. There were several radars at various sites around the area that were fed into this station on closed circuit television displays via microwave circuits. The operators were able to record these radar displays on video recorders that could be played back and would show the location of a target (ship) on those units for any given time. The operators that manned those stations were former radio operators, deck officers and members of the radar branch of the Armed Forces. When you realize the expense involved in operating those stations, one was left with the feeling you could have run two fully loaded ULCC's (Ultra Large Crude Carriers) together. This should have created one-large ULCC times the power of two-bang, and would have come away with less expense involved. But these stations were there and most Captains were not impressed. The expense was apparently justified in looking at the system in a long-range scale. New York City had nothing like this and there was more ships and shipping in a day there, than comes near this coast in a year. But it became mandatory for all ships to send in a large list of detail concerning the ship and request a clearance in order to enter the area. This organization wanted to grow to the point it controlled ships in the same way as Air Traffic Controllers controlled aircraft.

This system had its growing pains. The first years it was in service I did not receive a clearance to enter until we had entered and in some cases departed. Most of the Captains I was sailing with could have cared less and only one insisted on this clearance before arrival. I therefore had to request it in order to receive it before we arrived. Afterwards while operating VCS I sent the late Wilf Fontaine a clearance for his ship CCGS WOLFE with call sign CGCT to enter Canadian Territorial waters. We had a little fun with that one that was a mix-up on Ecareg's part. CCGS WOLFE had not left Canadian territorial waters since she was built in these same waters back in 1959. The sad part was that while we were tied up in this

communication, including the minute or so it took me to ask him how it felt to be flying the Greek flag, this prevented any other communication on this circuit, and probably some paid communication with a merchant ship.

When these stations first opened one Captain told me they would be great for running up and down this coast in fog when little or none of his navigational equipment was working. I could tell by the way he told me this that he already knew how he would extract his position from these operators and without admitting his navigational equipment was not serviceable. It would have been interesting to hear him accomplish that feat.

Since these stations had no radiotelegraph the regular coastal radio stations handled all the long-range communications and we at VCS got the largest portion of this message traffic. The technicians at the nearest coastal radio station did all the maintenance at the VTM stations, so the technicians at VCS also maintained all the equipment that made up Halifax Traffic.

We were tied up in transmitting and receiving many lengthy messages to and from many of these ships because so many of the foreign ships did not understand this service or these stations. All of the messages were handled free of charge and a ship could request anything from this ECAREG CANADA address. Actually during the ice season especially many of the routine clearance messages were rather long and contained mostly information on ice conditions and the route the ship was to follow through the ice. These ships were required to follow these instructions in order to obtain icebreaker assistance. Transmitting one or two of these messages was no problem, but on about the fourth in little more than one hour, tended to get you in one way or another. The majority of the messages were identical.

Unless there was something outstanding, I seldom read anything I received or transmitted via radiotelegraph. A minute or so after I received or sent a message with a ship I had no idea the name of the ship or what was contained in the normal run of communications. I honestly feel most operators got this way after a certain length of time on the job, and I feel this is the way with most jobs. Much of this job was repetitious. But a good case concerning this subject involved one of these Ecareg messages. The telex machine or the Ecareg telex operator goofed – at least somewhere along the route one line of the text of this message was repeated three times for no reason, before continuing with the text. In other words, three lines of the actual wording of the message were identical, one right after the other. I had just transmitted so many of these messages that I transmitted this one identical to the way we received it. I did not realize this until the operator on the ship questioned this – talk about feeling foolish.

THE LIFEBOATS

The Canadian government has maintained a number of lifeboat stations around our coasts for nearly two hundred years. The lifeboat station at Duncan Cove, in the approaches to Halifax Harbour was established in 1886. For many years many of these lifeboats remained nothing more than large rowboats, but these boats were improved with the advancement of small boat construction practices. As the combustion engine decreased in size and increased in horsepower, they were gradually fitted into these vessels.



C. R. "Sprack" Spracklin

This is one of the Coastal Lifeboats during World War I

The first to be fitted with radio communications did not appear until 1966 and the first of these was the one based at Clark's Harbour, Nova Scotia, granted, during the interim many boats fitted with radio played an active role in this type of service. The many boats in service with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Royal Canadian Air Force are good examples. This first boat assigned to the Clark's Harbour Lifeboat Station in 1966 was actually built in the United States, and is one of the United States Coast Guard's forty-four foot steel utility boats. Since then the Canadian government built a number of these at various small shipyards throughout the country. There must have been over twenty of them in service by the early 1980's. All had a number rather than a name, and the prefix of this number was the digit one. The one at Clark's Harbour was 101 and they were numbered upwards from that number.

www.mlb.com gives an excellent description of these lifeboats.

These lifeboats were identical to the ones I described with the Marine Squadrons of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Nine served in the air force and may have been the reason the Coast Guard decided to purchase more of these vessels.

The one that was based at Sambro was the 117 and it replaced the lifeboat at Duncan Cove. The radio call sign for the 117 was CG2613 and all those lifeboats had a similar call sign. The call sign was longer than the name.

Shortly after 101 commenced, she and all those built afterwards were modified for Canadian use. The main modification was a fiberglass house. All these lifeboats had more electronic aids on board than any merchant ship in which I ever sailed. Each had: radar, loran, CB-GRS, VHF, and SSB radiotelephone both

VHF and MF radio direction finders, to name the more important pieces. Some of this equipment spilled over from the deck/wheel house down into the small galley, washroom, and sleeping area.

They were supposed to be self-righting and fitted with safety harnesses for the crew for this purpose. When a close friend picked a new one up at the shipyard and wanted to roll it over as part of the sea trials, the shipyard employees would not permit it. This same friend and boat had a hair-raising experience on running into some bad weather during this very delivery. The boat rolled over so far the cutout switches of Canadian design, shut down the engines and nearly caused this boat to wash up on terra firma before the crew could get an anchor out and the engines restarted.

These lifeboats made their base at the government wharf of the port they were assigned. Nearby was a base in the form of a trailer that contained the office, washrooms, storeroom, and duplicates of the radio communications equipment. The VCS station communicated regularly with several of those lifeboats. They all transmitted weather observations to the extent we at VCS had those for 117 memorized up to the point of the actual observation. The first part containing the identification, position, and date/time was always the same. These lifeboats transmitted these weather observations from the office ashore, because there was insufficient room to record the observation while the boats were out on a mission.

There were six crewmembers assigned to each boat that worked a week-on and a week-off system. Three crewmembers per week worked a four-hours-on eight-hours-off schedule when not actually out on a mission. One crewmember of each crew is known as the Coxswain. Bill Stewart and the late Murray Garrison were the two Coxswain assigned to 117, with Bill in command overall. All of these boats have performed some excellent examples of humanitarian deeds, in one form or another, and if there was any way of putting a price on their service, they probably return the expense involved in their up-keep.



National Film Board 68-4346

This is the Coxswain Ron Newell and Seaman (in background) on board the Coast Guard Lifeboat 101. This was the first of a series of these Lifeboats. This one was purchased from the United States Coast Guard and this photo was taken in 1968, prior to a complete wheelhouse being installed. The rest of this class of Lifeboat was Canadian built (with the wheelhouse).



United States Coast Guard

A model of a 40-foot U.S. Coast Guard steel utility boat whips along the coast of Ketchikan, Alaska. Designed primarily for law enforcement duties and rescue in moderate seas, this class of boat operated in U.S. coastal and inland waterways out of Coast Guard rescue stations, bases, and Captain-of-the-Port offices. Among a variety of duties, they coped with anchorage problems in harbour areas, inspected piers for hazardous conditions, assisted in fighting pier and vessel fires, watched over pleasure boatmen, and assisted in distress cases ranging from towing a small boat ashore to pulling victims from a ditched aircraft. They were powered by twin six-cylinder 190 H.P. Diesel engines, they ran at a maximum speed of 23 knots, and had a range of 28 nautical miles at full power. Their fuel capacity was 370 gallons. They were constructed of steel with a "V" bottom, with an overall length of 40 feet 3 inches. They had a beam over fenders of 11-feet 4-inches and a normal draft of 3-feet 3-inches. Fully loaded they displaced 26,570 lbs. They were manned by a crew of three and with room for 20 persons or 5,000 lbs of cargo. This model was a follow-up improved version of the first group of steel 40 footers begun in 1951, under construction at the Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, Maryland.



John Rae VE1AGN

This is Coast Guard 117 at her home base Sambro, Nova Scotia on May 30th, 1980. Note the trailer with duplicate communications equipment.



John Rae VE1AGN

This is the Wheelhouse of the Coast Guard Lifeboat 117 on May 30th, 1980. Note the difference between this and the 101 in 1968.

All these lifeboats changed their names around 1990 and were named after the village or port they were based. They were given the terminology Cutter that had been assigned to a larger boat described in the next portion of this exercise or history. 117 became the Coast Guard Cutter SAMBRO. Since then these lifeboats have been replaced with a larger boat of the same name, but the overall job has changed little. They no longer stand a watch at the office but one crew is on for one week at a time with the other taking a week off. Chris Fleming and Steve Beazley replaced Bill and Murray in the Coast Guard Cutter SAMBRO. They are forever on course of one description or another and forever testing out new equipment of one type or another. They often have exercises with some of the military equipment, aircraft, helicopters and the like, that are assigned to the search and rescue branch of the Armed Forces.

THE COAST GUARD CUTTERS AND MORE ON THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE MARINE DIVISION

The United States Coast Guard has to be one of the finest organizations known to man and it is very frustrating to think we Canadians could have an organization just as efficient, had we retained the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Marine Division. The Canadian Coast Guard at its best will never be the equal of the Mounted Police Marine Division at its worst. The reason for this has nothing to do with the ships or personnel and is simply the nature of the beast. The Canadian Coast Guard employees are unionized government personnel on a civilian plan. The Mounted Police Marine Division was a paramilitary organization. The Coast Guard does not have the law of the country behind it as the Mounted Police Marine Division had. In other words, a Coast Guard vessel has to carry various officers from the Mounted Police or whatever organization is involved in whatever duty it is performing. The Coast Guard will never have the

communications capabilities or the backup service that the Mounted Police Marine Division had. Communications is by far the most important tool of any organization. A good organization can look very bad with poor communications, whereas a poor organization can appear more efficient with good communications.

Was the Mounted Police Marine Division as efficient as it should have been? The only contact I had with this unit occurred during the summer of 1962. At that time I was sailing as Radio Officer in the square rigged sailing vessel BOUNTY, built at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, to film the movie Mutiny on the Bounty. On completion of this movie, we took the ship on a publicity cruise and when we entered the various ports we visited on this cruise, we were well received by the local population. These ports were crowded with small pleasure craft that came out and sailed in with us. These small pleasure boats were well organized in the United States, but in Canada they were as near a nightmare as you would care to witness. The United States Coast Guard placed an eighty-foot patrol vessel that I have always known as the Point Class Patrol Boat at our bow, and led us in with a small patrol boat on either side of us. This eighty-foot boat has been labeled the Point Class because they all, at least to my knowledge, had the prefix Point in their name. The Point Class Boat is the boat the Canadian Coast Guard copied for their Search and Rescue Cutter. These six Canadian boats were a good example of the fact our government had no idea what it was doing when it assigned call signs from our blocks of calls. All six of these boats were sisters and identical.

CG2233	RACER
CGCF	RALLY
CG2232	RAPID
CG2230	READY
CG2231	RELAY
CG2242	RIDER



United States Coast Guard

This is the USCGC POINT LEDGE with international call sign NDLK.



Canadian Coast Guard

This is the CCGC RELAY with international call sign CG2231



National Film Board 63-7073

This is Captain H. J. Crocket using the Radiotelephone in one of the Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue Cutters.

Why did RALLY have a four letter call sign, one of the FORT FRANCES' old call signs, and the others a two letter four digit call sign? At least one had a call sign. Because of all the extra equipment incorporated in the Canadian version of these boats, our fishermen were not long in naming them fair weather boats. These six could not handle the rough weather necessary for a rescue vessel, and many who sailed in them during a storm, got down and actually kissed terra firma when safely back. If operated as designed they were an excellent patrol craft, and in the United States Coast Guard the crew went home every night unless needed for a mission, whereas the Canadian crew remained on board for twenty-eight days followed by fourteen days off. CCGC RALLY was based at Dartmouth and the other five were spread out over the Great Lakes and the West Coast.

The American Point Class Boat normally carried out its duties with a Chief Petty Officer in command. While taking the BOUNTY in and out of these American ports, Captain Coggins could sit back and relax, letting the pilot do most of the work. The two small patrol boats on either side of us were the forty foot utility boat described above and carried two Coastguardsmen, one standing and steering on one side and the other on the opposite side hanging on to a handle that was there for that purpose. Both wore white uniforms

and life saving jackets. The one steering was of the seaman trade or branch and the other was a motorman, both would have been Petty Officers, probably third class, the equivalent of a Leading Seaman in the old Royal Canadian Navy. Neither of these boats tolerated any foolishness from those in the pleasure boats. Those in the American pleasure boats appeared just as drunk as those in the Canadian pleasure boats that came out to greet us. You could feel BOUNTY's deck vibrate from the vibration of the large engines in these two small patrol boats. When a pleasure boat started to drift down on us, the patrol boat nearest to it would use a loud hailer, naming the offending boat and state it was getting too close to BOUNTY. If this offending boat did not move over immediately, the motorman in the patrol boat got a good hold on his safety handle. The patrol boat let go a blast on a siren. The boat leaped ahead so that it literally scooped the water out from under its stern and jumped at the offending pleasure boat. No matter how drunk the skipper of that pleasure boat appeared he got out of the way in a hurry, because he knew that the Coast Guard Patrol Boat would go straight through his boat if he failed to do so.

Entering Vancouver, British Columbia, was a different kettle of fish to say the least. We had no help whatsoever and why no one was run down and drowned is a mystery. One old Royal Canadian Air Force Crash Boat remained as close as possible to us, and the nut driving this appeared to be as drunk as any we met. At one point he ran across our bow so close he dragged his radio whip afloat under our bowsprit. At that point Captain Coggins was losing his cool and yelled to our Chief Engineer, Murray Munroe, for full astern. Murray snapped both engines astern with such force it felt as though he lifted the old girl's butt six feet in the air. We did not move until Captain Coggins was certain all was clear ahead and no one had been hurt, and that was one of the few times we were to hear him swear.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police

This is RCMP VICTORIA with international call sign CGMS. Apparently it was hard to get her to come in close for an official portrait as well. This is the steel built copy of the navy's Seaward Defense or Bird Class patrol vessels. She is a sister of the wooden RCMP BLUE HERON.



This old photograph was given to me by someone traveling the Alaska Highway in the early 1960's.

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY entering Vancouver, British Columbia, 1962.

While entering and leaving port with BOUNTY, I spent most of my time down in my room monitoring 2182 kHz. This was before the days of the very high frequency radio, with many walking around with a walkie-talkie strapped to their belt. Every so often one of these pleasure boats would call us and welcome us to that particular port. This not only gave me something to do, but gave those in these boats a little more to remember of our visit. It also let any of the official sources know that I was available if they wanted us. While entering Vancouver and as we were nearing the docks, one of these boats called and told me we were going to the wrong dock. I answered the boat that identified by the boat's name only, and said that our Captain and Pilot were quite capable of getting us to the proper dock, but thanked him for his concern. He immediately became rather panic-stricken and said he was the Harbour Police and gave me a description of his boat, an ordinary pleasure boat, stating he had a sign in one of the windows. I told him how I was dressed and that I would run up on deck. When he saw me he should wave and I would point him out to the Captain.

I then ran topside and spotted this boat off our starboard bow just where he said he would be. Captain Coggins by this time was as keyed up as we ever saw him. I had some trouble in getting his attention and when I did point this out to him he blew his cool completely and ran up the mizzen ratlines shouting to this boat. The pilot we had taken on board did not know the dock we were to go alongside. Captain Coggins turned BOUNTY among that mob of pleasure boats and got her back to her proper dock without incident. This has to say something about his capabilities in handling BOUNTY, but the big mystery behind all this confusion remained with the R.C.M.P. Marine Division. We had to wait a few days hidden in a small cove in order to arrive at the time advertised by the owners, Metro Goldwyn Mayer. While waiting at least one of the small R.C.M.P. Marine Division Patrol Boats came alongside for a chat. When we entered Vancouver the steel Bird Class Patrol Boat, RCMP VICTORIA with call sign CGMS remained off on the horizon from us. We felt at the time that she had just happened by for a look at us while we entered port. One thing is for certain, had she been ordered to assist us into the harbour she did a damn poor job of it. A couple of their small patrol boats, one on either side of us, with her in the lead keeping the drunks off, would have been a welcome sight. I still say the only reason no one was killed was due to the seamanship

performed by Captain Coggins with BOUNTY. I could not think of anything appropriate to say to RCMP VICTORIA, but made a point of calling her and telling her I was closing down my radio station. Hopefully they got the message.



Marine Engineering/Log

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY at her berth St. Petersburg, Florida during the 1970's.

ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

I had to trouble the United States Coast Guard twice for assistance in one form or another over the years. The first time was when I was sailing in BOUNTY. Just before we gave our wives a friendly little pat on the fanny and sent them home to Nova Scotia, and then departed Boston, Massachusetts, for Calais, France, an Admiral in the United States Coast Guard came aboard for a routine visit. During this visit we mentioned that the only thing that really troubled us on taking BOUNTY across the Atlantic was the one thing that had troubled seamen for centuries – weather. We stated that we had done all possible to ensure a safe passage. This included the construction of a fairly large sea anchor of two large timbers and canvas. If we ran into a storm we were going to throw this over BOUNTY's bow and make a serious attempt at riding out this storm. Oh yes, I also had my new main aerial for the radio-station that I had been whimpering about since joining the vessel. When we mentioned this concern for the weather this Admiral, whose name I no longer remember told me that when he returned to his office he would be sending a signal to all their vessels on station in the Atlantic. That I was to call a certain call sign he gave me, anytime Captain Coggins wanted this weather detail.

Shortly after this Admiral's visit, we cleared Boston Harbour, and BOUNTY blew the dust out of her old air whistle on the mizzen mast in the traditional three long blasts, meaning; good bye, good luck, and God bless in response to the armada of pleasure craft that had escorted us out to the harbour entrance. We were on our way with several hours of pure silence, except for the duty watches the rest made serious attempts at drying-out and resting up from another memorable visit. We were rather disappointed that we could not duck into home, possibly Halifax, as we passed so close to Nova Scotia. With memories of the performance of trying to get in and out of Western Canada so fresh in our minds, I do not think many dwelt on the subject. The majority of our wives had been over to Boston for a visit and as this voyage across the pond progressed I kept a serious watch on any ship that transmitted a weather observation. I had the weather code books and could break down these observations, and I remember copying these retransmitted ship observations from Halifax Radio CFH. One interesting observation I picked up at the time was from a ship with call sign FNRR, and on mentioning this to our second officer, he claimed it was a new French passenger vessel named the FRANCE and that proved accurate. When I gave this observation to Captain Coggins, I mentioned the fact that his speed code was 9, meaning in excess of twenty-nine knots, and that he was beginning to fade out on the end of his transmission from this high speed. I was never very good at trying to pull someone's leg, and needless to say Captain Coggins caught on and laughed about this as I did. At one point as we went along towards France, I was having trouble collecting these observations and had little to offer Captain Coggins on actual weather observations. At this point he suggested we take the Admiral up on his hospitality, and asked me to call the special call the Admiral had given me. This was during the first part of my career in radio and I honestly wish now that I had had some of the experience I had accumulated after this experience to offer Captain Coggins on that voyage. The one thing I failed to realize at the time, was that few operators retain these radio call signs as well as I seem to remember them. I felt at the time that, the one who answered my call immediately on 500 kHz would also know exactly who I was from my call sign. This operator, after we shifted to a working frequency and I made my request, hesitated to the point I could almost feel him thinking "How did this nut get that call sign, and how am I going to get rid of him before every nut out here wants the same thing – weather". So I reached over and tapped QRA, from the Q code meaning – the name of my station is and then sent SAILING VESSEL BOUNTY. At that point this operator jumped as though the Admiral had reached out and smacked him on the back of the head. We got our weather but at least fifty percent was of no use to us. We did not understand it but suspected some of it was the temperature from the seabed to high in the sky. We did make excellent use of what we understood and greatly appreciated same. This was the only time on the voyage that we made use of this most generous offer. We had heavy seas and high wind at one point about half way across, but made the passage in fifteen days if I remember correctly. At one point we went up one large sea and on reaching the top got blown down into the trough. I have been told this is known as being tripped. I have experienced it twice over the years. It is not a very pleasant feeling. You are rolling along and all of a sudden the deck appears to become a wall. This means that anything not secured down becomes a flying object rather quickly. When this occurred with BOUNTY I was sitting at the operating position transmitting our routine noon position message to the MGM office in New York via Chatham Radio WCC. Needless to say my transmission terminated rather suddenly as I went ass about face, and when I fetched up

I was hanging on the edges of the radio room door just behind me. This prevented me from dropping down into the officer's pantry. This was normally across the companionway but the radio room was now up with the pantry down.

Looking back, I do not remember being scared at the time because I was so fascinated with the speed in which Captain Coggins landed in the companionway. His cabin was next to this pantry and he had gone into it shortly before. I am certain he was in the companionway yelling "All hands on deck" before BOUNTY had a chance to shake free and right her-self. At least I was still hanging on the radio room door as Captain Coggins ran past for the ladder to the main deck. At this point I was not certain whether or not I was an official hand, but what the heck I have two, WCC's operator can wait, so I let go of the doorway and fell in behind Captain Coggins and went on deck right behind him.

The aforementioned sea anchor had broken loose but we managed to re-secure this without too much trouble. The only other damage was that one of the cannon had broken loose. It took little to catch this and get it re-secured back in its proper port in the ship's side. Fortunately these cannon were not authentic. They were made of wood and coated in a plastic coating to look original in the movie. Each had a steel pipe in the barrel so that a small authentic sounding bang or charge could be fired from them. I did not see this but was told that it was possible.

If I remember correctly I was away from my operating position about one-half hour. When I sat down to finish the transmission, I felt the operator at WCC would have tired of waiting for me and had gone back to communicate with other vessels. This was not so. I reached over and gave him a quick call to find he was waiting patiently. We had a bit of a chat about the lousy weather. I finished my message and signed off. WCC gave me excellent service and the operators at the station went out of their way to assist me. Since most of my message traffic was addressed to the United States I used this station daily while in the Atlantic.

My second request for assistance to the United States Coast Guard was a better example of the efficiency and excellent organization. During the summer of 1972 nearly ten years to the day after the BOUNTY request, I was Radio Officer in the GYPSUM EMPRESS with Captain Claud Brook in command. As explained earlier on these pages, the world economic situation was good and anything that floated could find work. Good crews were hard to find, or impossible, and if I remember correctly Captain Brook and Terry Ely, our Chief Officer, spent most of that summer working six hours on and six hours off. The company could find no qualified mates to assist them. I did what I could to help by working as the third mate would have if we had had one, entering and leaving harbour, and with the cargo. Possibly I was more nuisance than good, but at least neither Mr. Ely nor Captain Brook told me to get out of the way. So I presume I was of some use. Yes, it was quite a summer, an excellent experience but one I would rather not relive.

We were coming up from Kingston, Jamaica, bound for Jacksonville, Florida, on one of our runs. I was getting ready to climb into my bunk for the night when Captain Brook knocked on my door and stated one of our cooks was quite sick and wanted to know if I could get some medical help. The first thing that flashed through my mind was, "damn, with all the trouble this guy (Capt. Brook) has had this summer, now he has this to contend with". All I said was something to the effect "you bet, Cap, no problem" and tried to make it sound as though I had all the medical technology of New York City at my fingertips. As I climbed back into my khaki uniform, I said "Cap, I've never done this before but I'll give them plain statements and let those ashore ask the questions. There will probably be many so stand-by with the answers". He said that either he or Terry would be there for the questions and Terry was with the cook at the moment. That was an understatement, because I was beginning to wonder if either of them ever slept – it was one of those trips.

At the time we were in the Windward Passage just between Haiti and Cuba, and so close to Cuba we could see the fires ashore from the sugar cane fields. I have not learned why there are so many fires in a sugar cane field, but it must be some part or portion of the harvest procedure. As I staggered into the radio room I was thinking of what my best bet would be on the quickest answer. I knew I wanted the United States Coast Guard, which, in this type of situation would be akin to having one's own Mother. I was too close for Coast Guard Miami, Florida, with call sign NMA on twelve megahertz, and too far for the same station on 500

kHz because of the terrific amount of static on that frequency. That area has the heaviest level of static in the world, especially in the summer and this was August 15th, 1972. So I went for Coast Guard Norfolk, Virginia, with call sign NMN on eight megahertz, feeling it would be my best bet.

The BOUNTY was my first merchant ship and she had no emergency equipment, such as batteries to run the ships radio station if the main power from the ship's main generators failed. She was also a bit of a fire hazard, wood, canvas, and a lot of both. Therefore, I formed the habit in her of making sure all was set to go for an SOS just in case. If I needed to send one all I could manage from her main station on the ship's main generators would be all anyone would ever get. I feel it was a good habit and one I kept while at sea and fortunately did not have to use. I also sleep very soundly and that was the main reason I kept this habit. Captain Coggins had a good chuckle one night while in the Juan de Fuca Strait. We had picked up a tailwind after a voyage of steady headwind, and we were able to go into Vancouver ahead of expectations of a few hours previous. When I came around I was ready to go on 500 kHz with Captain Coggins asking what the heck I was doing. My answer was that you want me and it is the middle of the night so must be important.

So therefore, I had to wind the GYPSUM EMPRESS main Globespan transmitter up for maximum smoke or output on the eight megahertz calling frequency from 500 kHz, but I did not have to wait for it to warm up. I had learned long ago that if you wanted the least amount of trouble from those old tube rigs to leave the filament voltage on at all times. The heat from the filaments kept the equipment nice and dry especially in the tropics. So, I was ready to go in a matter of seconds. The receiver tuned to 8465 kHz if I remember correctly and as I belted NMN and reached for the log, the inevitable record, I received a strong DE. In other words, who are you? So I belted a DE GHZF, this is GYPSUM EMPRESS, and QSS, from the Q code meaning I will use the working frequency, followed by three digits like 377 meaning the working frequency of 8377 kHz or whatever this frequency was in GYPSUM EMPRESS. I had a choice if I remember correctly of three working frequencies in GYPSUM EMPRESS and used the first of these. Had there been interference on the first I could go two more on the same band with hope of locating a clear frequency before having to shift bands. Most always my first choice was okay and rarely did I ever have to shift to number two, and only once in a very rare case would I have to go to number three. The eight-megahertz calling band at the time was from 8356 to 8374 kHz. After the transmission of the QSS and three digits I terminated with the letter K, the invitation to transmit. Had I not received the strong DE after transmitting NMN only twice, I would have continued a repetition of NMN until I received the DE or until I had sent NMN something like twenty times. If no DE by that time I would have been ready to try something else, because by this time I knew the GYPSUM EMPRESS station well, and knew NMN equally as well from the many weather observations I had transmitted to them. In other words, what I had transmitted on my eight megahertz calling frequency looked like the following with the exception of the three digits that I no longer remember.

NMN NMN DE GHZF GHZF QSS377 K

It took much less time for me to do all of this than it has for you to read my description. The answer I received to this call was a bit of a surprise, but at the time a number of the United States Coast Guard Stations had the same frequency on the eight-megahertz band. I do not recall any interference problem from this arrangement, identical to all the British Commonwealth Stations. Actually it was more an asset than a liability that it proved in this case, and my strong reply looked like this.

GHZF DE NMF R UP

As I reached up and grabbed Globespan Gertie's chrome frequency change switch, I looked around at Captain Brook who was at my elbow and said, "Coast Guard Boston loud and clear Cap". He looked at me as much to say, "Why are you troubling them so far north of us". But not wanting to look a gift horse in the mouth nodded his approval. Oh yes, there was another little trick of many I had up my sleeve in those days. I always tuned my transmitter that involved a procedure of dipping one meter for resonance, and increasing the other meter for maximum output, matching the tank circuit of the transmitter to the load, the aerial, on the working frequency I intended to use. This was a little pet trick of my own, and will not be found in any manuals on the subject. It could very well have been illegal for all I know. More than likely it was, because

it was illegal to knowingly create interference and this falls into that very category, but all is fair in love and war. Operating a ship's radio station has always been a lot of the former, sometimes a bit of the latter, and on occasion something in between with me, so I justified this little trick on that basis. But this would accomplish two things in my mind. One was that it would likely clear anyone off the working frequency I intended to use, if anyone was on it, and at least would let them know I planned to land on it soon. The second and the reason I started this habit, good or bad, was that my transmitter was tuned for the frequency I would be passing messages. Therefore, tuned better for this frequency if there was any noticeable difference between the calling and working frequency in the same band. It would be very slight if there was any difference and this way I knew it was the better. There was no point in wasting time trying to improve the output. The rules stated then that these transmitters were to be constructed so that they could change frequency in five seconds or less.

So, on NMF's roger up to me I snapped over to the working frequency and was ready to go. I called him with our call signs a couple of times to give him a chance to tune me in and then went right into my request with GE OM – good evening old man. I then sent something to the effect I have a sick crewmember need medical assistance but do not know how to go about getting it. The latter was a bluff on my part. I knew about the messages known as deadhead medical – free of charge for medical assistance – but wanted to get this show on the road without having to look up the detail on these messages and waste a lot of time telling him the colour of the ship and the like. I also knew this operator would have a list of questions in front of him to ask me, and he would give me these questions long before I could find them. Besides this operator would be a United States Coast Guard Radioman using English, and my English, such as it is - is the only language I know.

In a matter of seconds this radioman was transmitting the questions I expected. As he sent them I reached over and wrote them down in front of Captain Brook. He placed the answer next to each question as he read. After the first session of these, Captain Brook left to go down to the cook's cabin and get the answers to the medical questions. For a gravel barge, and that is a very crude way of describing GYPSUM EMPRESS, we were in pretty good shape on the medical side. If I remember correctly the only medical instrument that was mentioned that we did not have, was a blood pressure cuff or Monometer that tells your blood pressure or voltage. I knew we had a good supply of pain killing drugs as it was my job to list these on various forms I had to complete for entering and leaving the different ports we visited.

It is hard to say how many trips either Captain Brook or Chief Officer Ely made between the radio room and the cook's cabin that night. By four in the morning everything had wound down to the point that neither the Coast Guard Radioman nor I had anything to ask each other. I told him that I was the only Sparks on board and that I was going next door to my bunk and catch a couple hours of sleep and would call him as soon as I was up. A couple of hours later, that seemed more like seconds, I was staring sleepily at Chief Officer Ely who wanted to know if I thought I was a passenger in QUEEN ELIZABETH 2. He said there was nothing more to report on the cook, we had done all possible, and he was not good at all. So I jumped out of my bunk and ran to the radio room, a few steps around the corner, and called the Coast Guard again on eight megahertz. This time Norfolk NMN answered me and said everything had been passed to them from Boston. A few minutes later all their questions had been answered and I got cleaned up for the day and breakfast. The catering staff consisted of a steward, two cooks, two mess-men, and a utility or cleaning man, so these people were shifted around to make up for the disability of the one cook.

As the day progressed with an occasional contact between Norfolk NMN and me, we eventually decided to switch over to Miami, Florida, NMA. NMA would have been on 440 kHz and I was on 454 kHz. At the time we would have been traveling at our maximum speed or as one engineer put it "with a vapor trail flying off our stern". With a three thousand horsepower steam turbine engine in a ship of 8180 gross tons, the vapor trail was only a figment of his imagination. We were running flat out and up around thirteen or fourteen knots. We were traveling towards Miami so our signals could do nothing but improve. I should mention that all five of the Gypsum ships built between 1947 and 1961 were more or less identical, and all five had beautiful main aerials. They were the standard Marconi long wire, but nearly three hundred feet long. My best contact on these was to pass a message from Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts, to Hamilton Radio VRT, Bermuda. I used 425 kHz and VRT was on 426 kHz. This took place at midday and involved a distance of over eight hundred miles, so any who know radio at all will have to admit that it was a good

hump or performance. But as far as I know the record was around six thousand miles for the same band and this meant that conditions were perfect and it was probably during the hours of darkness across the night side of the earth or globe. If I remember correctly this two way contact took place between Chatham Radio WCC, Massachusetts, and an American ship in the South Pacific back during the 1920's.

As sunset was drawing near on August 16th, 1972, the Coast Guard Radioman at NMA asked me for a complete description of GYPSUM EMPRESS, stating they were coming out to us. I immediately asked him if they were bringing out a medic or planned to evacuate our patient. He said to stand by and he would find out. About a minute later he told me they would be evacuating our patient.

What an outfit, because for all they knew we were from England because GYPSUM EMPRESS was registered in London, England. Here we were cruising up the imaginary line on the chart separating Cuba from the rest of the world, the twelve-mile limit. The political situation between the United States and Cuba had not been the best by any means for some years. On occasion we would see a Cuban Gunboat off in the distance, but to my knowledge none troubled any of the ships transiting the area in any way. From an error in navigation GYPSUM EMPRESS had gone hard aground on the western side of Cuba a few years previous to this, but managed to free herself at high water with no damage or interference from the Cuban people.

If I remember correctly we were all English Canadians on board this particular trip with the exception of Chief Officer Terry Ely whose home was London, England. We did have two or three Polish nationals on board, who had jumped from their Polish fishing vessels on a visit to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and had landed Canadian immigrant permits. The United States would not allow them ashore when we visited their ports, a decision well founded. Poland must have been quite pleased to be rid of them all, because they all managed to get themselves fired before we had come to a full agreement on which we had assigned the names, George, Bill, and Joe; their actual names were impossible. They were experienced seamen, something we could ill afford to lose at the time, but sitting in a bar uptown guzzling beer when you are supposed to be on board and on duty is something that cannot be tolerated time and again.

Meanwhile, I gave Coast Guard Miami a detailed description of GYPSUM EMPRESS and stated all on board were Canadian, and all spoke English, in reply to their routine question as to whether anyone on board used that language. I also told them a helicopter would have no trouble landing on one of our seven steel hatches. Our forward house (or superstructure) was well forward leaving nearly three hundred feet between this superstructure and the one back aft, and there was a ninety-five foot mast on each house or superstructure. I told them the only obstacle was the main aerial I was using at the moment, that would have to be taken down on the helicopters arrival, but we had either a VHF or 2182 kHz radiotelephone for communication when the main aerial was down. I suggested to Captain Brook that we leave the main aerial in place until we had radiotelephone contact, because the helicopter would likely want a signal from me on the radio direction finder frequency of 410 kHz in order to find us with their ADF – Automatic Direction Finder. Aircraft Pilots then used ADF as one of their main navigational aids. Just prior to joining the Gypsum fleet I had spent six years at Aeradio Stations in the Western Arctic and Western Provinces of Canada. I had spent a fair amount of time flying with a number of Bush Pilots in various types of aircraft. Many of these pilots had let me fly their aircraft so I knew what it would be like for the crew of this helicopter coming out to us.

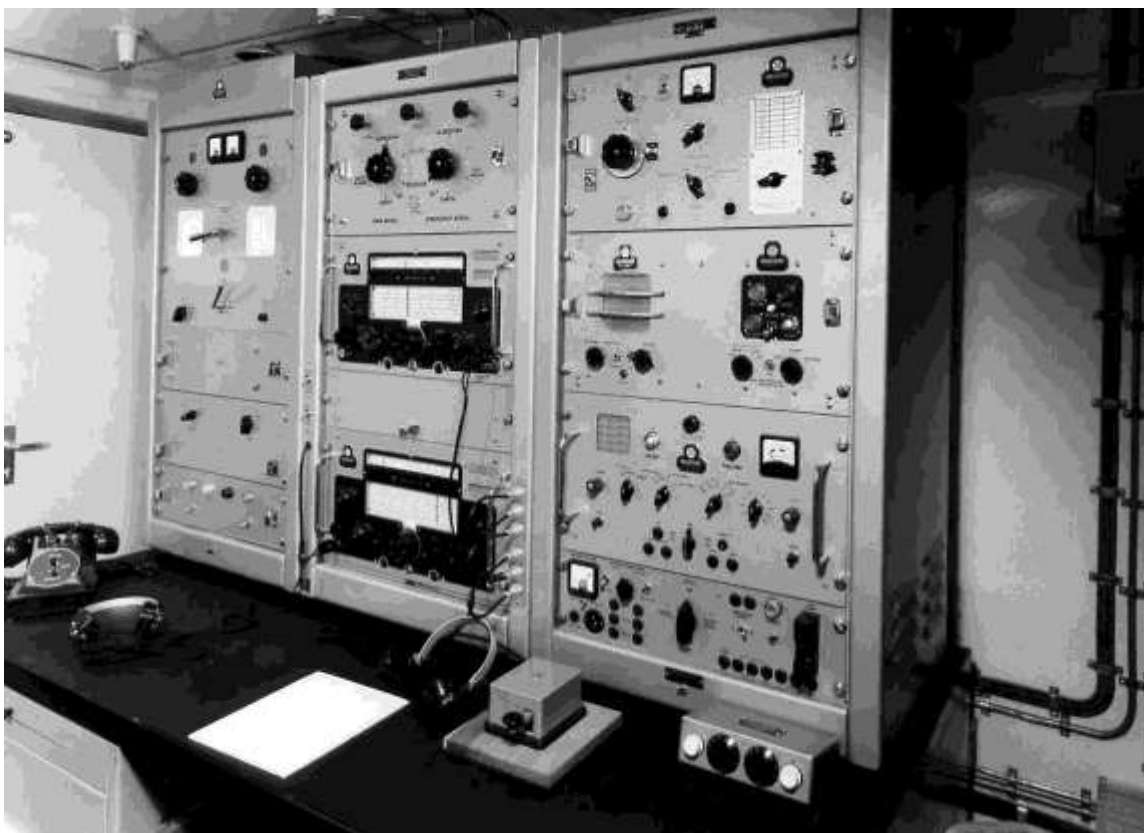
I believe the radioman at NMA asked me to remain in contact with him until we had established radiotelephone contact with their helicopter. At least I felt this best at the time and Captain Brook had Bosun Randall loosen the down-hauls on my main aerial and get it ready to drop as quickly as possible. Our 2182 kHz radiotelephone and VHF radiotelephone on channel sixteen were turned up to their limits. The 2182 kHz radiotelephone had a small wire aerial to the foremast and was not in the way of the helicopter. The VHF radiotelephone had a whip aerial on the forward house that was not in the way. It was nearly ten in the evening before we established contact with the helicopter. One of those moonless pitch-dark nights in the Caribbean where you have the feeling you could reach up and pick any of the thousands of stars out of the sky.

I made the first contact with helicopter Coast Guard 1476 on 2182 kHz, and we remained on that frequency until the mission terminated. On this first contact the pilot of the helicopter told me he had nearly sixty ships on his radar, and asked for a long count, one to ten and back, in order to home-in on my transmission with his ADF. This was good news, and the first I was to learn of an airborne direction finder capable of tuning that high in frequency. Any I had seen went to the top end of the broadcast band only, and many pilots went from point A to B on their charts, listening to the hometown AM broadcast station, with this same station pointed dead ahead on their ADF's. When the ADF swung around, the pilot knew he had just passed over the transmitter to which the ADF was tuned.



Captain O. K. Langdon

This is SS GYPSUM EMPRESS with international call sign GHZF. Note the round ports or windows just below the square windows of the bridge. Note the two sets of two ports in the centre of the superstructure. The two on the starboard side are the captain's office and the two on the port side are the radio room. The single port on the port side is the radio officer's cabin and the single port on the starboard side is the captain's cabin. The sets of two ports on the outboard sides simply provide forward visibility from a small outside deck on each side of the superstructure below the wings of the bridge.



GEC-Marconi Electronics Limited, England. Turners (Photography) Limited, Newcastle Upon Tyne

This is the Marconi Globespan installation on board the British MV PRIAM, 1966, with international call sign GPGE. This station is identical to the station fitted in the SS GYPSUM EMPRESS with international call sign GHZF, except for two minor features. GYPSUM EMPRESS had one Atalanta Receiver, and had a Monitor Emergency Receiver in place of the Alert Emergency Receiver fitted in PRIAM.

The radio room in GYPSUM EMPRESS was just below the bridge and chart room. The 2182 kHz radiotelephone was at the top of the stairs to the chart room, and the radio room was at the base of these stairs. On termination of this first contact with the helicopter, I ran down to the main station and told NMA we had established contact with their helicopter and that I was closing the main station in order to remove the main aerial. Meanwhile Captain Brook had Chief Engineer Joe Mano report to the engine controls, and once I gave the okay, had Bosun Randall drop the main aerial down on deck out of the way. I then ran back up to the radiotelephone to do all I could to assist.

After another contact or two with the helicopter, which was continually increasing in signal strength, Chief Officer Ely stuck his head in the door from the port wing of the bridge, and said he had the helicopter in visual contact. This I relayed to the pilot at which time he said he would appreciate having us steer a certain number of degrees from the wind direction and maintain a speed of eight knots. Captain Brook relayed the speed request to Chief Mano while Chief Officer Ely got accurate detail on the wind direction. Then Captain Brook altered course accordingly. In the meantime the pilot said he wanted to circle us for a good look. At the time we were running with only our normal navigational lights, red port, green starboard, white masthead, and white stern lights, with a desk lamp on over the chart table for illumination of the chart room. After the pilot had circled us, he asked us to turn on all our lights for a closer inspection. Captain Brook reached over to the main electrical switchboard and gave him everything, including all our bright cargo lights, and then picked up the microphone and told the pilot the lights were all on.

Most of us at one time or another, manage to do something that seems very stupid. This for me was one of those times. Captain Brook telling the pilot the lights were on struck me so funny I burst out laughing and had a job to suppress the feeling. There were a number of factors that prompted this improper reaction from

me. First and foremost is the fact we were tired and tense, but wanted a perfect performance on our part. I had had only about two hours sleep in the last thirty-six hours, and I doubt if either Captain Brook or Chief Officer Ely had had as much. My job in this mission was coming to an end, and when Captain Brook took that microphone in hand, you could say it had ended. I was beginning to relax inwardly and for better or worse I had done a perfect job. My choice in frequency for the initial call had been perfect, with help from a very alert Coast Guard Radioman in Boston. All had been perfection even the equipment had performed flawlessly. I had had a lot of trouble with the electronics in GYPSUM EMPRESS for the past four months. That is mentioned elsewhere, and if that part or portion of my career is used on judgement day, my chances will not be very good, but at the moment I was very pleased with myself, my station, my shipmates, and all connected with any of these.

The first thing that flashed through my mind, when Captain Brook turned on the lights, was the feeling I experienced one time when landing at the Edmonton Industrial Airport during the middle of the night in a small Cessna aircraft. The Edmonton Industrial Airport must be the only airport located in the centre of a city. The airport was built and the city grew around it. Sitting in this small Cessna as we turned down wind and slowed to land, I felt as though I were suspended in a sea of lights – a fantastic feeling.

When Captain Brook turned those bright lights on I could imagine the crew say something profane and reach around the cockpit for their shades or sunglasses. It all made for a very amusing situation to me, but the next morning when I saw Captain Brook after we both had time to unwind I made a point of apologizing to him, and tried to explain the reason. He just laughed, and said he wanted the pilot to know he had all the lights we were able to give him, and this of course was quite correct. No one would have done it differently, but not everyone would have a damn fool laugh while they did it.

After the helicopter looked us over for a minute or two he asked us to turn out the lights, and told us he was coming over our number two hatch and lower a basket. We were to place our patient in this basket, making certain no one secured the basket to the ship in any way. The radioman at NMA had stressed the latter, and Captain Brook had briefed the crew accordingly and by this time all the crew, with the exception of those on watch in the engine room were out watching this performance.

Our sick cook was Bill Sprake, who was sixty-three years of age. He had come to Canada early in life from England, and settled around home, the Kentville area, and knew both my father and grandfather, which gave us something to talk about. He was rather proud of the fact we called him Willie Sprigs around home. He also made the best hot cakes I ever ate.

As the helicopter came over us I watched the proceedings from the chart room window with Captain Brook, who was kept busy making sure all was in order. Although the lighting was rather poor, we could see a crewmember standing in the open door of the helicopter with a white helmet and harness on. Out from the door was a short boom and hanging from this boom was the wire basket, seemingly hanging on a thread. Down on the walk was Willie who did not look good at all, although he was able to navigate with the support of two of our rugged seamen. When the basket reached the hatch cover, several of the crew helped him up onto the hatch into it. Willie looked even worse sitting in that basket hanging on while the helicopter lifted him off and took off into the darkness. We all stated afterwards that we had no desire to ever make a trip in one of those baskets because it was a flimsy looking apparatus indeed but no doubt quite safe or so many organizations would not use them.

On completion, Captain Brook thanked the pilot over the radio, ordered us back on course, called Chief Engineer Mano, and we started to get back into routine. Shortly after this Bosun Randall came up and told me my aerial was back in place. I called NMA and told them the mission was complete then got ready for a good night's sleep. Captain Brook had me transmit an excellent message the next day, thanking all concerned. The Coast Guard told us they had taken Willie direct to the Parkway General Hospital in Miami, and I felt Willie would appreciate a copy of Captain Brook's message of thanks, so made up a copy, wrote him a note, and mailed them to him at the hospital. We heard nothing more from him so I assumed after a stay in hospital he went back home. It was a couple of weeks before I got home and when I stopped in to visit my Mother, she handed me a newspaper clipping asking "Did you know him?" The newspaper clipping was Willie's obituary. This was quite a blow because I honestly did not expect it since

he was able to walk to the helicopter. He had died two days after reaching the hospital from a ruptured bowel. Thank goodness all had gone so well, and above all else, thanks to the United States Coast Guard he was able to die in a hospital rather than in his cabin on the ship. At least he knew we had done our best, and all we could for him. That basket was probably a most welcome sight in his condition. The copy of the message and the note were returned to me sometime later.

FORM 81/82
International Marine Radio Company Limited
 PEALL ROAD . CROYDON CR9 3AX . ENGLAND
 Printed in England.

IMR Marine

SS MV _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

R.P. VOUCHER NO.	OFFICE OF ORIGIN	PREFIX	NUMBER	NO. OF WORDS	HANDLED IN		TRANSMITTED/RECEIVED		
					DATE	TIME	TO/FROM	TIME	BY
	GYPSUM EMPRESS	MSG	NR 2	CKNC	17	1550GMT	NMA	1559Z	SCR
TO AVOID MISTAKES PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS							CHARGES		
SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS		GIFT SERVICES — SHIP TO SHORE Full details are available from the Radio Officer					OTHER SHIP & OR COAST STN.		
							LAND LINE & OR CABLE		
TO:-		= USCG MIAMI COMMANDING OFFICER RCC MIAMI =					AMOUNT PREPAID FOR REPLY		
							OWN SHIP		
							TOTAL		SC

ON BEHALF OF ALL ON BOARD GYPSUM EMPRESS I WISH TO EXTEND OUR SINCERE THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO YOU YOUR STAFF AND ESPECIALLY CAPTAIN AND CREW OF CG1476 FOR THE PROMPT AND SKILFULL MEDIVAC LAST NIGHT. IT IS MOST COMFORTING TO US AND OUR FAMILIES TO KNOW OF YOUR EVER FAR REACHING PRESENCE = MASTER +

This Telegram has been accepted subject to the condition that neither IMRC nor any other Telegraph Company or Government administration to whom the Telegram is or would in the ordinary course of the Telegraphic Service be forwarded shall be liable in any circumstances for any loss, delay or damage arising or resulting from non-transmission or non-delivery of the Telegram, or delay or error in delivery or in the transmission or delivery thereof through whatever cause with non-transmission, non-delivery, delay, error or omission shall have occurred. Shipments accepting reduced Telegrams must be accepted under the same conditions as full-rate Telegrams by the official receipt.

Photographed by John Rae VEIAGN

This is the message of thanks Captain Brook had me transmit.



United States Coast Guard

Helicopter Coast Guard 1469 a type HH-3F and a twin sister of Coast Guard 1476 helping a construction crew set up aids to navigation daymarks on a jetty off Barnegat Inlet, New Jersey. The type HH-3F is a versatile amphibious twin-turbine rescue helicopter equipped for supporting worldwide navigational aids, border patrol, law enforcement, and cosanographic and geodetic research. The work of search and rescue is made easier by the airborne navigational computers they carry.

There is one interesting item I have found worthy of note and the next morning while Chief Engineer Joe Mano and I were having breakfast naturally all the talk was on the helicopter and evacuation. The helicopter Coast Guard 1476 was a type HH-3F, a large turbo-powered helicopter. Joe told me that when it came over the ship he had to open the throttles nearly wide open to maintain the eight knots the pilot requested, and for a few minutes became rather concerned he would be unable to maintain that speed for lack of power. I found this rather interesting realizing the helicopter did not touch the ship. This force was the air the helicopter was displacing in order to remain airborne. Someone must have the formula for this because it is the reason a hovercraft can act like an icebreaker.

This mission probably fell into the books as a routine run. Quite likely none of the Coast Guard personnel involved remember it. This adds to the overall picture of the efficiency of the United States Coast Guard. Bravo Zulu – BZ – meaning WELL DONE, and once again THANK YOU.

October 16, 2007

This is the Eleventh Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

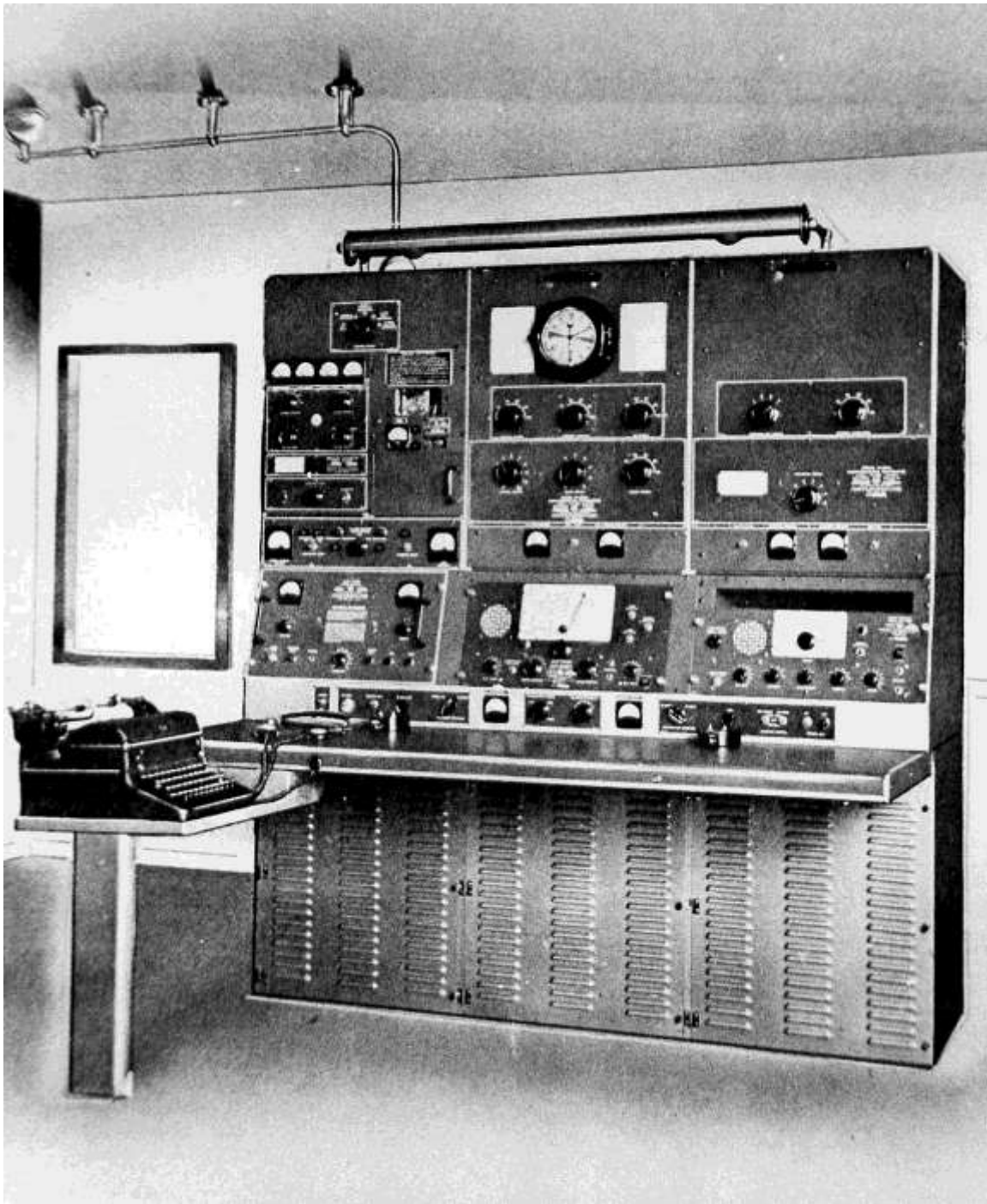
A FEW OPERATING EXPERIENCES

From my work on the BOUNTY I learned a great deal. Much of this I should have known when I went on board. I received excellent instruction from the Radio College of Canada, Toronto. I had three of the finest instructors I have ever had. But without the six-month experience with an experienced operator, that so many foreign radio operators received, I had plenty to learn the hard way – via trial and error.

To say the late Captain Ellsworth T. Coggins was the finest Captain under whom I ever sailed would be an insult to so many who were just as good, but his patience made my learning process much easier, while I learned a trick or two from the BOUNTY. Since we sailed together I have often wished I could make another trip with him. I was most disappointed that BLUENOSE II was not fitted with a radio room. BLUENOSE II with call sign CYJZ is a replica of our famous schooner BLUENOSE that won so much fame from the international fishing schooner races during the 1920's. She is depicted on the back of the Canadian ten-cent piece.

BLUENOSE II was launched early in 1963 right after we paid off from BOUNTY. She was fitted with radiotelephone only. Captain Coggins commanded BLUENOSE II. He was in command until Oland's Brewery, who had built her to advertise their brand of schooner beer sold her to the Nova Scotia government. Some of the crew from BOUNTY made up part of the first crew in BLUENOSE II.

The efficient operation of radio equipment requires a good electrical connection with the earth's surface and BOUNTY's wooden hull made this very clear. All of her electronic equipment was leased from the Radio Corporation of America. If I remember correctly, this rental was four hundred fifty dollars per month. The electronic equipment was the latest tube type; the transistor was just starting to make an appearance. BOUNTY had a main medium frequency transmitter, a high frequency transmitter, and two general coverage receivers, from the RCA 5U Console. A small two megahertz radiotelephone of around fifty watts output, and all of this equipment was installed in my cabin with my bunk, locker, desk or shelf for operating, bookcase, and shelf with this equipment secured to same; one of the most convenient stations I have ever operated.



Radio Corporation of America

Main Transmitter
350-515 KCS
A1 or A2 Emission
250 watts output
Mains Operated

Main Receiver
85-560 KCS

1.9-25 MCS
Superheterodyne
Mains Operated

High Frequency Transmitter
2-24 MCS (Xtal Controlled)
A1 Emission
300 watts Output
Mains Operated

Emergency Transmitter
410-500 KCS
A2 Emission
40 watts output
12 volt battery power supply

Emergency Receiver
14-650 KCS
Regenerative
Mains or battery operation

The chart room had a Loran receiver, small ten-inch radar, and a small Bendix direction finder. The radar antenna was mounted up on the foremast with plug-in connectors so that it could be removed easily. This was required so that the radar antenna would not appear in any of the film while making the movie Mutiny on the Bounty. For the same reason the loop antenna of the direction finder was mounted on top of this unit in the chart room. Therefore, the direction finder never worked as designed, but made an excellent broadcast receiver.

One of the RCA technicians and I tried to lessen the electrical grounding problem. BOUNTY had a sheet of copper attached to the outside of her bottom for this purpose, with a bolt running through her bottom to the bilge. We replaced the copper strapping running to the radio equipment from this bolt with some much larger. This would decrease the electrical resistance to electrical ground, and was all we could accomplish in that area. The company officials insisted that her main aerial had to be cap-tarred in order to protect the seamen working aloft on her sails. BOUNTY's first antenna was a long piece of electrical welding cable, the stuff that runs from the welder out to the clamp holding the welding rod. This of course is cap-tarred, but horrible stuff for an aerial because the actual wire inside is multiple-strands of fine copper resembling horsehair. It worked, but salt water did awesome things to it. When salt water struck those fine wires, they turned the many shades of the rainbow, and many more shades of their own. In other words, this was corrosion and a high resistance to electricity. This main aerial entered the radio room via a large feed-through insulator. The inside connection was above the operating desk. The outside connection was up above the after-channel on her starboard side. The channel is the proper term for the large piece of wood on the side of a sailing ship's hull. These channels give the shrouds a wider spread. Naturally to keep my relationship with BOUNTY's Chief Officer, Captain Ralph Hemphill in proper perspective I insisted on calling these the running boards. And he of course insisted I use the proper term. I never think of Captain Hemphill but my big toes ache. As BOUNTY's Chief Officer he naturally had the four to eight watches. And the BOUNTY had air-conditioning but such a small unit it was of little use. Especially in the tropics and warmer weather sleeping with anything over you was a bit warm. When it was time to get up in the morning my feet were normally out at the foot of my bunk and Ralph would tie a small piece of line to the radio room door with a slipknot in the other end and drop this over my big toes. He would then grab me and yell "Sparks". Naturally I would jump nearly out of my bunk and own hide for that matter. It is a wonder I did not pull one of those toes out at the roots, but all in fun and a pleasure at this date to remember his laughing so hard.



London News Agency Photos Limited

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY entering the Tower of London Bridge September 1962.

For Captain Hemphill's benefit I will use the proper term. Every so often I had to climb over the bulwarks and get down on this channel. I then removed a foot or so of the main aerial to get rid of this corrosion. Captain Coggins got a new aerial for the station just prior to crossing the Atlantic. Where he found it, I never dared to ask. It was proper ship's antenna wire, the seven strand heavy copper, but cap-tarred. This further improved the efficiency of the station. Now all possible had been done in the way of improvements so I had no reason to complain. BOUNTY's main aerial was the standard inverted L or Marconi configuration. It ran from the insulator above the channel to the top of the mizzenmast then over to the top of the main mast. I can see it in the movie a number of times, and in every photograph I have ever seen of the BOUNTY. In addition to the main aerial, there were two more. A long vertical wire of welding cable ran from a small feed-through insulator on the opposite or port side of the ship to the top of the mizzenmast. This we called the receiving aerial. I had a small knife-switch for this on the bulkhead separating the radio room from the chart room next door in order to use this on the main receivers. I rarely used this and left it connected to the Loran receiver in the chart room. The third aerial we called the radiotelephone antenna, mainly because this is where we found the radiotelephone worked best. I could use this as the main station's emergency antenna via the large main knife switch mounted on the radio room deck head just above the main feed-through insulator. This was another Marconi or inverted L arrangement that ran up and across from the mizzen to the main mast, crossing at the main yard.



C. E. Young

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY off Lunenburg, Nova Scotia on sea trials from her builder's yard; Smith and Rhuland, Lunenburg.



Radio Officer S. G. Roscoe

This is the Medium Frequency or Main Transmitter in BOUNTY.



Joan Roscoe

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe in the Radio Room HMS BOUNTY adjusting the lower of the two main receivers. The unit on top of the two receivers is the 2-mHz radiotelephone. The medium frequency CW transmitter is to the left and the high frequency CW transmitter was to the right out of this photograph.



Joan Roscoe

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe in the Radio Room HMS BOUNTY transmitting a message. The main or medium frequency CW transmitter is to his right.



Joan Roscoe

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe operating the Collins KWM-1 Amateur Radio Station VE0MO in the Radio Room of HMS BOUNTY. This was just to the left of the main operating position. Note the main power supply to the RCA main station down on the left in this photograph.

With the help of two off-duty seamen, one to key the transmitter and the other to relay my instructions, I went for a look. With this R.F. meter held about six inches from the main antenna, I adjusted it for a reading of sixty on the scale and then went about the ship taking care not to move this setting. The stays and shrouds supporting the masts were steel cables coated in hemp rope to look like the lines on the original BOUNTY. I was loading everything on the ship even the forward stay coming down to the bowsprit gave the identical reading to the main antenna.

What was it my superb basic electronics instructor, Mr. Spence G. Smith, at R.C.C. said? "There are no good conductors or insulators. The difference is in the degree of permeability." What he said, and what I am trying to describe, is that when I keyed my transmitter on BOUNTY, the material that resembled a conductor became an antenna, and the rest of it was a fairly poor insulator.

Only once did this fact scare me. Over a meal one day, Captain Coggins stated that the radar was likely not working well, because some of the seamen had complained of an electric shock while working aloft. For once I kept my big mouth shut and let the radar take the blame for what was most certainly my keying one of the transmitters. Therefore, I kept things down to a minimum. If this persisted and the real fault became known, that would definitely terminate my Amateur Radio Station VE0MO, and would limit my transmitting to a short daily position message of ten or fifteen words while the seamen stayed clear of the rigging. I heard nothing more of this and went back to a full routine a few days later.

The only operating problem I had in BOUNTY was trying to get rid of our daily position reports while off the West Coast of Mexico. As stated, the static is the highest level in that area of anywhere around the world. It is so strong on 500 kHz one has the feeling one could get out and walk on it. The cause of this static is the natural heat lightning over the various hills on land. Therefore, this is the bad portion of the good – the colourful flashes of lightning at night, especially over the hills along the West Coast of Mexico. This meant 500 kHz was out of the question. In order to contact an American station I had to use a high frequency. Mr. Stroud, our excellent code and operating instructor at R.C.C. Toronto, had given each of us a copy of the British publication "Handbook for Radio Operators". We used this for our operating instruction, and I naturally carried mine aboard BOUNTY. Not wanting an infraction report and I have yet to receive one, I operated via this book to the letter. If I remember correctly the procedure for calling on the high frequencies in this manual stated we could send the call sign of the calling station as many as thirteen times. Then we had to identify with our call sign three times, send the last three digits of our working frequency and the letter K, the invitation to transmit. We were allowed to do this twice and then had to wait for two minutes before repeating. We were permitted three repetitions of this and if no answer, were to terminate. Since I did not catch one of these stations on so few calls, needless to say I was getting nowhere. After a few days of not being able to report our position, I decided something had to be done to improve this performance or else it would be to everyone's benefit for me to report to Louis Belliveau, BOUNTY's excellent cook, and have him put me to work washing dishes. My transmitter was putting out maximum smoke, such as it was, so the only thing left for me to do was to get a receiver on the calling frequencies and find out how the old timers made contact. It was quite a lesson. As near as I could tell they kept tapping the calling station's call sign until that station lifted his calling tape or marker transmission, and gave them a DE – who are you or from? Then they were in business. I closed my handbook, threw it up on a shelf in the bookcase, grabbed that old RCA telegraph hand key in earnest, and have never looked back.

If you let plain old common sense be your guide, all will go well. When radio operators got together in one way or another, infraction reports were a topic of discussion on occasion. Rod Sheppherd, a British operator told me he got caught in a political incident over them one time. I believe he said it was the Portuguese who, at the time, were out to get British operators and were picking them up on any infraction they could. Bill Kerwin claims he got one for transmitting KPH (San Francisco) eighty-five times while in the South Pacific. When I asked him what he did about it, he said he framed it, because anyone with nothing more to do than count the number of times he called KPH deserved some respect. So a routine breach of regulations is not as serious as I had feared during my first months in BOUNTY. Naturally the fraudulent transmission of a distress signal would have gotten you shot on sight, and so it should, but the infraction reports were based on common sense.

No one, especially a former student at Radio College of Canada, can record any of the history of communications in this country without a brief description of the late Ted Stroud, the operating and telegraph instructor at this institution. He was truly a legend in his own time, and about the only thing he can be compared with is one of these modern automatic code transmitting machines. He seemed to be programmed for various speeds, and transmitted perfect code at any speed desired. One of the first questions former students of his ask each other is whether or not they ever heard him make a mistake. No one to my knowledge ever did and this goes way back to the earliest portion of his career, because the oldest former student of his I have met was a student during World War II.

The only complaint I could find with my instruction at Radio College of Canada was the fact we were not given a weekly transmitting test. We did have a weekly receiving test and I made one hundred percent on everyone we had. Al Johnson, a former naval operator who was in the Navy with me, would have done as well except we were kicking each other under the table one time and that caused him to miss a few letters. He got ninety-eight on that test, but a perfect score on all the others. I have always found receiving code very easy, to the point the Navy moved me ahead one class during the first weeks of our training. I knew nothing of the code when I joined the Navy, but in our branch we did no transmitting. One of the few times I ever touched a key was when I wrote my second-class certificate exams and I had been told by several I felt should know that anyone who could receive code could also transmit code. The Navy had measured my receiving speed at forty-five words per minute in five letter groups just previous to this, so the twenty words per minute on the second-class certificate exam was so easy it bordered on boredom. The Radio Inspector who examined me was so impressed with the neat printing I gave him on the receiving he paid little attention to the transmitting. Any transmitting I had done in the Navy, both on their equipment and the Amateur Radio Club Stations had been via radiotelephone. The first telegraph contact I made was the first message I sent from BOUNTY. Whoever gave me the QSL – acknowledgement for receipt – for that message deserves a medal of the highest order. Adding to everything else, I was not in the best shape from a rip roaring bon voyage party just before we departed. Since then I have been trying to improve my transmitting, but am convinced until the very end I will be trying to figure out why I can copy so well, and send so poorly. Over the years I have found that in many cases the poorest senders can receive better than the good senders and for sometime I felt that those who sent good code were so impressed with themselves, they had no time for copying anything but the best code. This could be true in some cases, but no one has the magic formula for the making of a good telegraphist. Copying code from one of those automatic machines bores me to the point of falling asleep. Give me a swing or signature in the code any day, something to keep my interest up, and this is likely the reason I send so poorly. I like a swing so try and send one. I am very nervous and no doubt the average rock has more rhythm in it than there is in me. I have never had any trouble in sending messages so it is not that serious, and the best claim they are not happy with their code. But a good swing in the code from the twang of one of those old RCA transmitters will move me to homesickness every time.

The most stupid mistake I ever made was when we were bound for Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Captain Coggins was the only officer who had been there, and if I understood him correctly, he was not certain we would get ashore. Apparently there had been a political incident taking place while he was there. They could not go ashore to the point they could not get their own lines in. There was also some question as to whether the Spanish Flag would be the proper flag to fly while there. From my naval experience I felt that if you had a message you chose the proper frequency and sent it to the station nearest to the addressee. I still operate this way and could fill these pages with experiences on that subject. At the time, Radio Station EAT on Tenerife had medium frequency only. After many calls, including assistance from a British ship near EAT, I had no contact. Whatever prompted me to try and ascertain whether or not Madrid Radio EAD had telegraph service to the island is beyond me. But the circumstances surrounding our arrival, as we then knew them must have influenced me. I should have sent the message to EAD and let them figure out how it went from there. So, I went through the Q Code trying to find the code that would supply this answer. I compounded this mistake by not using QSO? – Can you communicate with? For some reason I chose QSP? – Can you relay free of charge? I had no sooner sent QSP? Then it hit me like a ton of bricks that the operator receiving would think I wanted free service between him and Tenerife. As these things go, I had contacted an operator as stupid as I was. Instead of acknowledging my request and giving me QSJ – the charges for – to send this message on to our office at Tenerife, he threw the switches on me and went back to sleep.

I gave some thought to Cadiz Radio EAC, but went back to EAT in the end. It took close to fourteen hours to see that message over the side. When we docked at Tennerife we received the royal treatment. A fantastic island that I would like to see again, but this experience taught me that it is possible to contact station EAD Madrid, something I have not been able to do since. I have not put much effort in that direction, because on my next attempt in contacting this station I learned something that became my route from then on.

Several years after this many of the crewmembers I was sailing with were living all over the place. Chief Engineer Joe Mano, mentioned on these pages, was living in Florida. 2nd Officer Bruce Stirrat was living in Jamaica, and so on. Bruce joined the Canadian Coast Guard a few years after this and was Commanding Officer of at least two of their vessels. Back then we were at sea a lot so our families lived wherever they chose. Because of the speed of the modern aircraft, it would not take long to reach them when we were on leave.

At the time I again tried to contact EAD Madrid I was relieving Ian Dodd in the GYPSUM QUEEN. A ship's radio room should have been operated the way the British operated them. They were fitted with all the books, catalogues, parts, etc. necessary to obtain nothing but the best with the station. Ian's station was in top shape, including a lengthy letter describing the past history of each piece of equipment and what I could expect from each. Little notes were pinned up giving the frequencies, times of traffic lists, and so on, of the majority of the stations contacted during the various voyages. It was a real pleasure to operate such a station.



Captain O.K. Langdon

SS GYPSUM QUEEN with international call sign GHYY

The late Captain J. A. Blinn, VE1SZ was master of GYPSUM QUEEN, and the late Jan Starkel was Chief Engineer. Jan was living at the tourist Mecca of Mallorca, Spain, and one morning he gave me the usual birthday or anniversary greeting for his wife. One of the few pieces of paper-war we did not have to fight in the Gypsum fleet was the Portage Bill, which included the crew's wages. The Captains did this. The normal procedure in handling a message for the crew was to transmit same, type up the necessary copies including one for the Captain's file and indicate the charges for same. This had to be done in British Sterling then converted to American Dollars, the currency we were using in the ship. I also gave the Captain a small receipt in order for him to place same with the Portage Bill to remind him to deduct the charges from the crewmembers wage on his next pay day. In other words, all I had to do was send the message and the Captain collected the money involved.

I no longer remember our exact position at the time, and the only point I could give to describe our general position with any degree of accuracy would be Florida. We were likely just north of Florida. After I cleaned up my routine work in the radio room, I decided to transmit Jan's message and tried to do so via EAD Madrid. After a number of calls my common sense, such as it is, told me I was wasting my time. It

must be siesta time in Madrid. I had worked out the charges via EAD Madrid and decided to compare it with Portishead, England, GKB. Just as I finished this Captain Blinn walked into the radio room with nothing better to do at the moment, and asked me what I was doing besides creating interference. I replied that I was creating interference and trying to wish the Chief's wife a happy birthday, or whatever it was and was having no luck shaking Madrid's operator awake. He would have to sail past the Madrid station in order for me to throw a rock through the window and wake him up. But since that was impossible I decided to see what it would cost to go through Portishead and showed him my figures for the difference in charges that were very little. If I remember correctly something less than ten cents American, which is the reason I used mainly Portishead after that. My transmitter was idling away in the corner, and I swung down or up from EAD Madrid to Portishead GKB while I was telling him this. GKB was the same signal strength, on the same band, likely twelve-megahertz, as EAD. In a few seconds I was listening to GKB answer ships. I noted a few of the calls so that I would know when my turn was coming up after we had established communications.

Many operators did not like working the larger stations, but I looked forward to some message traffic with them for the challenge if nothing else. For this reason I said to Captain Blinn that I would bet him twenty-five cents I could have an acknowledgement for my call, not the message, in less than three minutes. He said, "Make that twenty-five dollars and I'll have the Bosun chop down your antenna and we'll see how well you do". And with that he went away laughing.

I started my call at thirty minutes after the hour, whatever it was, and by thirty-three minutes after was sitting on the working frequency with the high voltage switched off on the transmitter, and a QRY36 – your turn is number thirty-six – in hand. At six minutes past the next hour I had a QSL – acknowledgement for receipt for Jan's telegram. Not a bad piece of work for thirty-six minutes and I likely had a friendly little comment on the weather or something to go with it. No matter how busy they were at that station, I always came away thinking they really cared about how we were doing at sea.

At the next mealtime I walked into the officer's dining saloon to find Chief Starkel and Captain Blinn the only officers at the table. When I sat down at the table and was glancing over the menu to make my choice of "marinated gainesburger" or whatever "the blacksmiths in the galley" were preparing for that meal, the Chief terminated whatever it was he and the Captain were discussing. He glanced over to me and said, "Did you send my message, Sparks"? I replied, "Yes, no problem Chief, it went out about an hour ago", or whatever the time factor was. At that he said, "Thank you very much" and carried on eating.

No matter how hard he tried, Captain Blinn could never pass up the opportunity for a little good-natured fun, and he spoke up and said, "He sent it okay, Chief, but sent it to England and said you should be living there". At that the Chief quit eating and said, "Is that right"? I said, "Yes it is, Chief, because the Captain refused to sail past Madrid in order for me to wake up their operator". At that the Chief asked the inevitable question, "Does it cost very much that way?" Naturally, to keep things going I replied, "Oh yes, it costs a bundle". That did it the Chief dropped his eating tools and just stared at me. Captain Blinn, laughing at the other end of the table, wasn't any help.

The Chief's wife would have been keeping a close watch of every penny that came in and went out. Money would be the only excuse for tolerating such an existence. We were away from home so much of the time. It would be in order to blow a dollar or two on such a telegram, but anything in excess would mean a portion of the next leave would be spent in explaining such extravagance. In other words, the fun and games were over. So I explained my reason for sending his telegram as I had, stressing the little cost difference and that the Portishead operators were the worlds finest and would give his telegram the best of care. I probably overdid my excuse to the point that from that day the Chief insisted all his telegrams were to go the same route. Since then I made a quick comparison with the charges involved. If I remember correctly all of my messages for Europe went via Portishead Radio. After my explanation and the Chief knew the facts we had a good laugh and dug into our "gainesburgers".

Captain Coggins came into Charlottetown while I was sailing in the Coast Guard Ship TUPPER and we had him up to our home for a meal. This gave us time to swap a few yarns although any connected to my experiences are definitely no competition for the poorest of his. He had some fantastic experiences after

leaving BLUENOSE II alone. He came away from World War II a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Canadian Navy. Via our conversation during this meal he related a story that is well worth repeating here.

During the first years of his command in BLUENOSE II one of his engineers was Ted Weeks who was Amateur Radio Operator VE1AGM. While Ted was with him, he operated Amateur Station VE0MY in BLUENOSE II. Marsh Pysar and I were operating at Yellowknife Aeradio, Yellowknife, North West Territories, at the time. Marsh had made contact with Ted several times via his station VE8BB.



Nova Scotia Government

BLUENOSE II with international call sign CYJZ



Nova Scotia Government

BLUENOSE II



John Rae VE1AGN

This is the CFAV FIREBIRD with international call sign CGVX leading BLUENOSE II with international call sign CYJZ out Halifax Harbour as the lead in the Parade of Sail held at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1984.

Ted Weeks operated a Collins KWM-2 in BLUENOSE II, the more modern version of the Collins KWM-1 I operated in the BOUNTY. At one point Ted's antenna dropped down over the foresail of BLUENOSE II, and when he keyed his transmitter this burned the foresail. The interesting part of this fact is that it only burned and cut the vertical threads. It would be most interesting to learn the polarity of the antenna at the time, and which of the two components that make up a radio wave, the electro-magnetic or the electro-static, caused the damage to this sail.

THE LONGEVITY TWINS AND THE B.I.O. SHIPS

To include a description of all the vessels and organizations that owned them, who used the services of station VCS over the years would make for a large set of encyclopedia. I have tried to give a brief description of the major Canadian fleets. The Canadian ships were just a small portion of those communicating through the station over the years. There were many Canadian ships that I have not mentioned. LADY LAURIER was the grand old lady of the fleet. She was owned by the Canadian Government and could be found puttering around the coast of Nova Scotia tending buoys, re-supplying lighthouses, looking after the needs of Sable Island, and all such mundane jobs that lasted for a period of fifty-five years. She was the fourth Canadian vessel to be fitted with wireless. CANADA, MINTO, and STANELY were the first fitted in 1904 and LADY LAURIER was fitted the following year, 1905, when she entered service. Her first call sign was LR and that became MLR when the Marconi calls were given the M prefix. After the Radiotelegraph Convention in London in 1912, she was assigned the call sign VDF. When all ships were given four letter call signs, she was issued CGSL – Canadian Government Ship Laurier – and this remained her call sign until she was decommissioned and went to the ship breaker's yard on March 31st, 1960. During her lengthy career the LADY LAURIER was in the charge of sixteen Masters and four Chief Engineers, of whom the last were Captain M. C. Lever and Mr. R. B. Collings. One of her

former Radio Officers, Leo Irwin, was on the staff of station VCS for many years. Leo enjoyed his tour of duty in her very much. From so many years of faithful service she is still fondly remembered around the coast of Nova Scotia. Captain M.C. "Mel" Lever became a very active amateur radio operator when he retired with call sign VE1VX.



Ernie O'Hara VE1AG

3rd Mate Donald J. Williams in the Radio Room of CGS LADY LAURIER August 1940. Don was Regional Manager Search and Rescue Coast Guard Base Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.



Ernie O'Hara VEIAG

Cleaning snow from the deck of CGS LADY LAURIER March 1941



Ernie O'Hara VELAG

Left: Buster Creighton 2nd Steward and Ernie O'Hara Radio Officer CGS LADY LAURIER August 1940

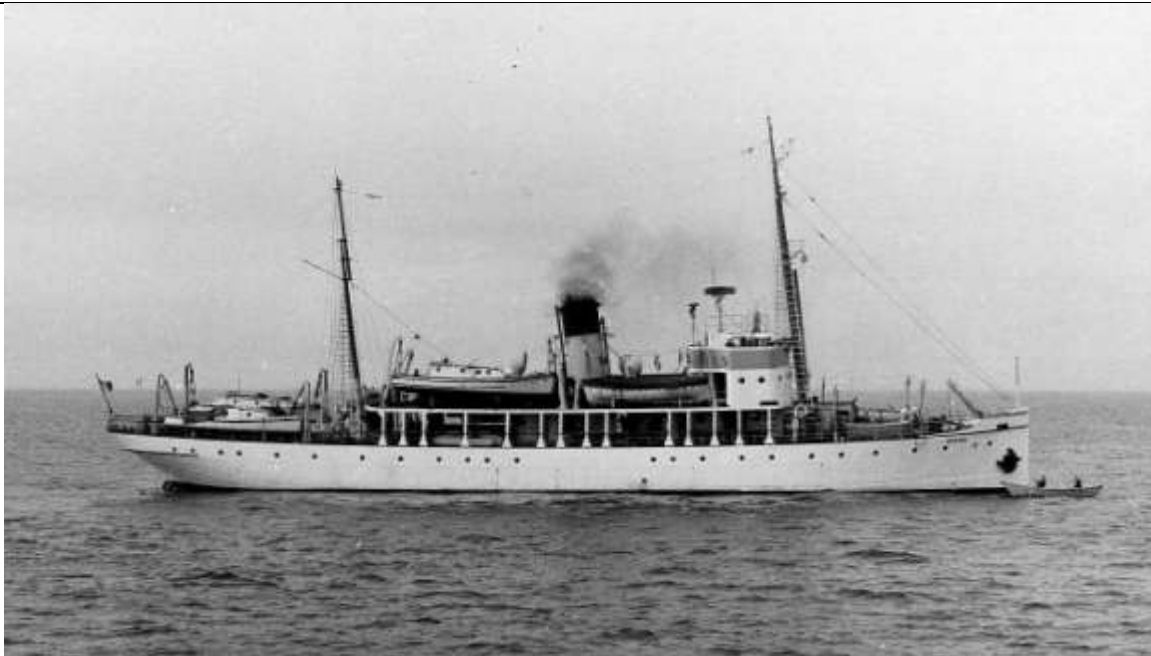
The ACADIA is another vessel that put in many years of faithful service. Like LADY LAURIER, although the two ships were not alike in design or appearance, she was built in the United Kingdom and first entered service in 1914. She was built for hydrographic service and was therefore assigned to the Department of Fisheries, a service that has remained with the same branch of the government for years. Fisheries is now a branch of the Department of the Environment, or vice versa, and the majority of the hydrographic work is done by the Bedford Institute of Oceanography (B.I.O.), a branch of the Department of the Environment. While I was with the Canadian Coast Guard ships there was a rumour floating around that the Coast Guard personnel were going to take over the operation of these ships. Nothing ever came of this rumour and I do not know whether or not this reached any farther than our mess decks. Most of the Coast Guard members were most excited about the idea because it would at least give them a break in the form of a nice cruise somewhere other than our fog and ice infested coasts. These B.I.O. vessels spent a lot of time in these same waters. The Department of Fisheries and the Coast Guard Ships became one and the same about 1996 and the ships retained the Coast Guard colours – red hulls and white superstructures. The B.I.O. and Fisheries vessels were painted accordingly. The B.I.O. ships were all white and Fisheries all gray. It looks different to see these old familiar ships in Coast Guard colours.

When ACADIA came over and entered service, her wireless station was issued call code VDT. When she received her four letter call sign it was CGFS – Canadian Government Fisheries Service, later changed to CGCB. She terminated her many years of faithful service with this call sign. Unlike LADY LAURIER she has been saved from the ship breaker's yard and is retained at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic at Halifax, Nova Scotia. We are very fortunate to have ACADIA and it is a pity that LADY LAURIER could not have been saved. Both vessels certainly earned any upkeep that would be necessary to keep them.

The B.I.O. ships, with the exception of CSS MAXWELL, based at their research centre in Dartmouth were all fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a Radio Officer.

CGDG	HUDSON
CGBV	DAWSON
CGCL	BAFFIN
CG2200	MAXWELL

CSS HUDSON is the only ship that has circumnavigated both the North and South American continents. She did this in a single voyage about 1969, from Halifax down to Cape Horn, up the West Coast around both continents and back to Halifax. For some unknown reason the MAXWELL's call sign was changed to CG2802 in 1980.



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS ACADIA with international call sign CGCB



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS MAXWELL



R. Belanger Institute of Oceanography

This is Radio Officer George Wilson operating his mostly Marconi Station on board CSS DAWSON. One can see the top Atalanta receiver has been replaced with a Racal and the Globespan transmitter has been replaced.



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS DAWSON



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS BAFFIN



R. Belanger Institute of Oceanography

This is CSS HUDSON in Scott Inlet, Baffin Island, North West Territories (now Nunavut), September 1978.



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

This is Radio Officer Neville Best operating his Marconi Globespan Station on board CSS HUDSON. This station was removed and replaced with a newer station while in refit December 1978. Neville was like so many of the Canadian ship Radio Officers and had one beautiful transmitting fist. It would be a real pleasure to spend an afternoon taking traffic from him today. Note that his lower Atalanta receiver has been replaced with the newer Marconi Apollo receiver.

THE CABLE SHIPS

The first of the wireless-equipped Cable Ships in this area was the MACKAY-BENNETT that was based at Halifax from 1884 to about 1924 when she retired from sea service. The MACKAY-BENNETT's first call code was MB. When the Marconi calls were given the M prefix this call became MMB and remained such until she retired. Britain received the complete block of calls from MAA to MZZ at the 1912 International Radiotelegraph Convention in London and still holds this block of calls.

There have been many Cable Ships that have communicated through the coastal radio stations of this area. Canada owned one of the finest. This ship was the world's largest icebreaker cable ship and was jointly owned by the Canadian Government and the Northern Electric Company Limited. It was manned by personnel from the Canadian Coast Guard and made its home port at St. John's, Newfoundland and came under the authority of the District Manager of the Canadian Coast Guard at that port. In 1993 this ship was taken over by Teleglobe Canada and severed her connection with the Canadian Coast Guard. This ship, JOHN CABOT carried two Radio Officers for the first part of her career with the Coast Guard.

The Cable Ships that have more or less made this area their home base and have carried many Canadian crewmembers including Canadian Radio Officers are:

MMB MACKAY-BENNETT
GFXK JOHN W. MACKAY
GKQC CYRUS FIELD
GDMN LORD KELVIN
CGDJ JOHN CABOT
VCGM JOHN CABOT (after her 1993 refit)

Frank Burns who retired as a radio operator at station VCS and Wilfred Fontaine both served in these ships. Wilfred was Radio Officer in CCGS WOLFE for many years then moved into the office at the Charlottetown Coast Guard Base. Skid O'Sullivan retired as Radio Officer in IRVING GLEN and was another of the many Radio Officers in the area to serve in these Cable Ships. Their main job was the installation and maintenance of the many under-water telegraph cables stretching between North America and Europe.



Canadian Coast Guard

This is the cable ship CCGS JOHN CABOT with international call sign CGDJ. She is flying the Canadian flag from her mizzen gaff that is a common place to fly her flag of registry while at sea. She is flying code flag H from the starboard (right) side of her main mast. That indicates that she has a pilot on board. I cannot see the flags she is flying from the port (left) side of her main mast but since the top flag is letter C this would indicate that she is “making her number” CGDJ.

A FEW MORE DISTRESS INCIDENTS

There were many Distress Calls handled through the VCS station over the years. You would be quite correct in assuming that each and every contact the station made with a ship was a form of assistance in one way or another. But a direct form of assistance involving an emergency of one form or another was

performed at least three times every week. The actual or major distress calls handled over the years fell into a category of your personal interest. Looking back, many come to mind.

F/V ANGELA B. MILLS

The loss of the fishing vessel ANGELA B. MILLS in August of 1956 is one of the more prominent for the residents of the local area of the station because her Captain and crew live here. On August 10th, 1956, she loaded ice, fuel, and stores, at Sambro for a swordfishing trip to the Grand Banks. Her Captain was Harold Henneberry who is still sailing out of this port. He and six crewmembers from the area were set adrift in their dories three days later when the ANGELA B. MILLS sprang a leak and sank. Their distress call was not heard because of static from a storm approaching the area. The majority of the other fishing vessels had gone for shelter, and because the batteries that supplied the operating voltage for the lights and radio were immersed in water shortly after the crew realized the vessel was sinking. All aboard managed to row in to Tripassey, Newfoundland, on August 25th and survive the incident, although they had been over ten days in open boats without food. The St. James United Church in Sambro, Nova Scotia put on a re-enactment of this incident in their annual Fisherman's Service in November 2006.

S.S. SUERTE

Another incident that comes to mind is the loss of the Lebanese vessel SUERTE in January 1962. She somehow became confused while entering the approaches to Halifax and struck Shut-In Island, going hard aground. One Air Force and two Navy Helicopters lifted the twenty-eight crewmembers to safety. HMCS LOON, one of the Bird Class Patrol Vessels, was the first on the scene but could do nothing because of the high seas. This SUERTE incident brings back a number of memories to me. The vessel lay where she grounded until the local fishermen raised a ruccas and the government decided to have the wreck towed out into the Atlantic and sunk.



Canadian Armed Forces (DNS28550)

HMCS LOON with international call sign CGLO was assigned to keep an eye on the SUERTE and this shows her coming in from one of these checks in February 1962.

In December 2006 I received the following information from Hart Watt an ABTD1 rating in LOON at the time:

“The background is that we received the call to recall our crew to go out and help this ship. We got our men on board sometime within an hour or so of the call and set sail immediately approx. 2130hrs or 9:30PM. We approached the ship and were signaled by light (I think). Art Cipryk can tell you, he was the radioman on board. Anyway we were told to come straight in by the freighter. Luckily we had a Newfoundlander, P2 Eric Meuse, for a boatswain. He was on the bridge as we approached. Without warning he ordered both engines full astern. We were about to hit a shoal. We stopped about 50 feet from it. The charts were then checked and sure enough the freighter had come in and went behind the shoal. We approached the ship from the stern, taking her same route in but the water was too rough for us to come alongside. The men on the freighter felt fairly safe at that time and we waited until light to make another attempt at getting them off. We spent a rather cold night. At dawn, the winds picked up again and we couldn't get close enough again. Then the choppers came and picked up the crew. The choppers got lots of press and we never even got thanked. It's a good thing a sailor can take a joke.”

And I received this from Jim Sidey right after hearing from Hart Watt: “I remember that night very well. I was on the wheel when we began our approach, and Eric Muise heard waves breaking but we could not see a thing. Anyway, Eric rammed the throttles full astern and it's a good thing he did or we would have been in real trouble as you all know the LOON was made of wood. I do remember we did manage to get alongside next morning but the seas were so bad that one moment we were 20' above her and the next 20' below looking up. We had to pull out as it was impossible to even attempt to get anyone off. I was an LSWU (Leading Seaman Weapons Underwater) rate at the time.”



Canadian Armed Forces (28390)

This is the Lebanese vessel SUERTE aground off Halifax January 1962

SUERTE was the 337th Liberty Ship out of a total of 385 built by Bethlehem Fairfield in the United States. She was launched in 1944 as the SAMLISTAR one of the many Sam Boats built by the United States and

sent to Britain under lend-lease. During her eighteen years of service she had three names, flew four flags, and had five international call signs.

GWDK	SAMLSTAR	1944	British
GCLX	HURWORTH	1947	British
TIVR	SUERTE	1954	Costa Rica
HOEN	SUERTE	1958	Panama
ODEZ	SUERTE	1960	Lebanon

SUERTE was declared a total loss on April 5th, 1962, and was towed off the rocks of Shut-In Island the next day. One of the tugs used for this was the old steam tug IRVING BIRCH with call sign GBHH. At this time I had just received my second-class certificate and was trying to find a ship in order to get my six-month endorsement that was most difficult because there were very few ships that carried radio operators, and hardly any less than 1600 gross tons. This was the maximum size I was allowed to sail in alone without this endorsement. The IRVING BIRCH was in Saint John, New Brunswick, and I received a telephone call in Weymouth, Nova Scotia, wanting to know if I could join her the next day. She would leave Saint John and swing in to Yarmouth and collect me there. No definite plans were made and I was left with the understanding Saint John would get back to me.

This SUERTE incident was on all the local radio stations and in all the local newspapers and my father at Kentville had heard on a news broadcast that IRVING BIRCH had left Saint John but had not been heard from since. Dad became rather concerned and phoned Weymouth to see if they had heard anything from me. He was surprised to find I was still there. After talking with him, I phoned Saint John thinking the reason they had not heard from their tug was because they had failed to pick me up. This was not the case. Apparently one of their permanent operators had arrived on the scene sooner than expected and had gone in the tug. The IRVING BIRCH was scrapped shortly after this.

Joan and I had been married a few months then, and when it looked as though I would be leaving in the tug, she knit me a toque from pieces of heavy yarn left over from a dozen projects. The old toque is as good as new after many sea voyages and six years at arctic stations. Every time I see it I think of the old SUERTE. A few of the seamen who sailed in the tugs that towed her out and sank her told some good yarns about the experience. After the crew had been lifted off she was open to anyone and first aboard helped themselves to the booze, then went to see what was there for the taking. One of these characters took a fire axe to the radio room, for the hell of it, ruining anything of value there. Another rolled a good-sized coil of line over the side and let it drop into his fishing vessel. The coil went straight through the boat and the whole thing, coil and boat are still lying on the bottom. These seamen did tell me that they managed to save quite a bit of paint and sold it. In some ways I am sorry I was unable to make the trip in the tug. Station VCS was kept busy with this incident when it happened and for three months until she was towed away and sunk. There have been many such incidents in this area and one could go on forever collecting the detail.

M/V CHRISTMAS SEAL

Another distress call handled or connected to station VCS was during the spring of 1976 on May 13th, 1976 to be exact. The efficiency with which those calls were handled then was such that it was possible for one to be terminated before many on duty at the station were aware of its having taken place.



Wamboldt-Waterfield, Halifax, Nova Scotia

CHRISTMAS SEAL off Halifax, Nova Scotia 1976

I mention this incident because of the history of this vessel. Many Newfoundlanders knew her personally. For years she was used as a mobile X-ray unit, going to the outports of Newfoundland, assisting in the detection and cure of tuberculosis, thereby obtaining her name from the popular TB seals. According to Downhomer, a Newfoundland publication, volume 17, number 06, November 2004, a group of school children named the vessel, which was funded by public donations and the sale of Christmas-themed envelope seals. This publication stated the United States Navy had sold the vessel to the colony for one dollar. She had been stationed at their Argentia, Newfoundland naval base.

According to a former Newfoundlander, Doug Reid, he sailed on this vessel during WWII from 1943 to 1945. He stated that at that time it was known as FP102. The Newfoundland government decommissioned the vessel in 1970 and sold her in 1971. She retained her name. M/V CHRISTMAS SEAL with international call sign VOVQ and was outbound from Halifax on May 13th, 1976, and experienced an explosion in her engine room that caused her to burn and sink within a short while. Halifax Traffic received the distress call and relayed it to the Supervisor at VCS so that all ships in the area could be notified. In the meantime Coast Guard Regional Office was notified and several helicopters in the area were diverted to the scene.

Station VCS was in communication with CCGS ALERT a search and rescue vessel with the CGDQ call sign and notified her. A scheduled container ship ATLANTIC STAR with call sign PCVK was also in the area and diverted. All of this equipment was on course for the distress in a matter of seconds and all eight crewmembers were rescued without incident. Two elected to proceed to East Jeddore with a whaler containing two outboard motors rather than take the prearranged lift. The only injury was a slight burn to one crewmember in the engine room at the time of the explosion. ATLANTIC STAR picked up four men in a rubber raft and two men from a Boston Whaler. After all eight men had been accounted for CCGS DARING tried unsuccessfully to create a wake in order to sink the burning CHRISTMAS SEAL and stood by until the wreck eventually sank.

M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES

Had lady luck not played such an active part in this incident, no one today would know the whereabouts of the M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES, which sank seventy-five miles southeast of Halifax, or what became of her twenty-one man crew.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is Bill Hall operating the Medium Frequency Radiotelephone position at Station VCS on May 24th, 1980. We made a mistake in staging this one. Bill did not smoke and that is my pipe on the far left rack of the console.

On Wednesday, March 12th, 1980, Bill Hall went to work at station VCS and took over the medium frequency radiotelephone position for the first four hours of his eight-hour day shift. For all intents and purposes this was to be another routine day and no one at the station expected any different. As things often happen for no reason, Bill put a little more effort into the job than was necessary. There are two things he did which are worthy of note. One was that he took a time check from Radio Station CHU, Ottawa, and checked the setting of the clocks when he went on duty. This is normally done at 1000 GMT, nearly two hours before Bill went on duty, and again at 1800 GMT, later in the afternoon. The other thing Bill did was to turn the volume up full on one of the 2182 kHz receivers, which is the distress and calling frequency for the two megahertz radiotelephone band of frequencies. Because of this latter move, about three-quarters of an hour after the day shift operators had taken over duty, the MAYDAY or distress call received from the M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES reverberated off the walls of the operations room and off the nerves of every operator on duty. Captain Gabriel Cote, Master of the MAURICE DESGAGNES, was making this transmission and was very excited. He had a right to be and it took awhile for him to calm down.

M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES was a small freighter of 2467 gross tons. She had been purchased by a Company in Quebec that intended to use her in a scheduled service between eastern Canada and the West Indies. She had been in this service for about one year and had made many contacts with station VCS during this time. On this, her last voyage, she carried a Radio Officer while in the West Indies, but this operator must have been paid off in New Orleans, Louisiana. We had messages for her that we were unable to deliver.

OGJH	VAASA PROVIDER	1963	Finland
OGJH	LAURI-RAGNAR	1966	Finland
OGJH	FINNRUNNER	1971	Finland
VCFP	MAURICE DESGAGNES	1972	Canada

The MAURICE DESGAGNES had departed New Orleans bound for Seven Islands, Quebec, with a cargo of railroad ties. When she approached the area south of Nova Scotia she ran into heavy weather and high seas. A number of storms had passed the area in the last few days, a typical March for this area, and the Atlantic was churned up to its normal state for that time of the year. At about six-thirty on the morning of March 12th, a huge sea struck MAURICE DESGAGNES that caused some of her cargo of railroad ties to break loose in her hold. This loose cargo broke some of her bulkheads and caused a crack in the deck that in turn permitted water to enter the ship.



Canadian Forces Base Shearwater, Nova Scotia

The crew of MAURICE DESGAGNES being lifted off by Helicopter



Canadian Forces Base Shearwater, Nova Scotia

The MAURICE DESGAGNES sinking

Fortunately for the crew of MAURICE DESGAGNES the destroyer HMCS HURON, a new turbo-powered destroyer, was carrying out an exercise only forty miles away. When HURON learned of the distress call she raced over to assist and in so doing caused some superficial damage from the high speed in the heavy seas. HURON lost a few life rafts and tore off some of her guardrail on the quarterdeck. Once the HURON was alongside Captain Cote felt he might be able to limp into Halifax for repairs and requested she escort him in.

After Bill Hall received the distress call from MAURICE DESGAGNES, he shut down the remainder of the medium frequency position and did nothing but communicate with this distress incident. This meant that the lighthouse schedules, any duplex phone calls, any routine message traffic with ships fitted with radiotelephone only, and so on, terminated for the duration.

At 11:45 AM, the normal time we rotated from position to position, Jim Best moved up from the sixteen-megahertz radiotelegraph position and took over from Bill. Bill then moved over to the twelve-megahertz radiotelegraph position. All of these distress calls came under the control of the Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax, RCC Halifax, and this meant that there were many messages to be handled from this organization and the various vessels in the area. HMCS MARGAREE, one of the older destroyer escorts, went to the scene to assist along with HMCS HURON. The Canadian Coast Guard Ship DARING, the former RCMP WOOD, was sent to the scene, and a helicopter based at Shearwater Naval Air Station asked if it could assist. Commander J. D. Spalding of HMCS HURON asked the helicopter to come out which meant there were now three helicopters to assist in the evacuation if this became necessary. Each of the two destroyers was carrying a helicopter. Therefore, the various messages from RCC and the numerous verbal requests meant that Bill had been kept busy, and that Jim was kept just as busy when he took over.

At about two in the afternoon it became apparent that the M/V MARUICE DESGAGNES would not remain afloat long enough to get into Halifax and it was decided to remove the crew by helicopter. When I first learned of this distress I was at home. I heard it on the local broadcast stations, and the first thing that crossed my mind was that I hoped it would be over before I went in to work, because I had the medium frequency radiotelephone position for the first four hours of my evening shift. When I took over from Jim Best, at about three forty, he said, "You'll be sorry". That I knew, but there was no way of avoiding this since I had worked the six and four megahertz radiotelegraph positions the evening before. No one liked the radiotelephone positions and that was the reason for the rotation system, so that no one would be stuck on these time and again. If the static did not drive you insane, trying to communicate with the various foreign languages would. At times you would have liked to connect a few of them through to Dial-a-prayer, but this would do no good because much of their English was so poor they would never have understood what was taking place. Jim said that the last he had heard they were lifting the crew off with the helicopters, and brought me up to date on the various details. From experience I knew no one out there wanted to hear from me, so I sat back and waited. Shortly after four, HMCS HURON called and said they had evacuated all twenty-one men from the MAURICE DESGAGNES, and that all twenty-one were now in HMCS HURON. Shortly after that she again called and said that MAURICE DESGAGNES had sunk at four thirty-six, just twenty minutes after the last man had been removed. They cut that one rather fine with only twenty minutes to spare. It took me awhile to get permission to put the medium frequency radiotelephone position back in normal operation. I received this permission at five thirteen and made the five ten weather broadcast first, three minutes late.

HMCS HURON landed the crew of the MAURICE DESGAGNES in Halifax, and the Coast Guard officials made their routine investigation of the distress, we were to learn of the luck that made their rescue possible. The first and foremost is the fact that Captain Cote had been trying to transmit his distress call for over an hour. Since we did not have facilities for recording any communications, our officials contacted the United States Coast Guard who did. On their recordings they had two bursts of something that could very well have been Captain Cote trying to make this transmission. Therefore, this means one of two things. Captain Cote in his excitement was not operating the radiotelephone properly, or this radiotelephone did have a fault in its electronic circuits that cleared itself. Had the ship's Radio Officer been on board he would have been able to clear this fault, or would have had several pieces of equipment in order to execute this distress call. This equipment was on board but not available to the Captain because he was not qualified or capable of operating it.

They were very fortunate that this radiotelephone commenced operating when it did, whether the fault disappeared as an intermittent fault so often does, or whether Captain Cote realized his error in the operation of the equipment and got it going. We were told Captain Cote had the mode switch on the radiotelephone stuck between the AM and SSB position and admitted this after he tried to blame Bill for not answering his call. This was a very poor situation for these Canadian seamen. We were told that Bill Hall did not answer Captain Cote's distress call because he was busy communicating with a lighthouse. This is ridiculous. Bill had handled everything perfectly and if anyone was foolish enough to be out in such weather without a Radio Officer, he should have been prepared to accept the full responsibility for the end result. When Vern Hillier, who was operating the 500 kHz position, relayed the MAURICE DESGAGNES distress call he naturally got many replies. There was so little chatter from the operators on 500 kHz it was hard to get the required ten to fifteen minute log entries during periods of poor weather. But on transmitting a distress relay most ships including a number who had been on our traffic lists for several days would reply. I often wondered whether these latter Radio Officers ever realized they were out there for something besides the ride. Twice I told HMCS HURON that we had routine message traffic for the MAURICE DESGAGNES and asked if they would accept these messages. My questions were ignored so we cancelled and stated the ship had sunk and we were unable to deliver. When you look back on the many incidents like this all one can think of is – thank God it is over. The computers now in use can create all the incidents and take all the blame.

The second item we learned after this incident was that HMCS HURON was supposed to be down south on an exercise but had developed equipment problems and had returned to Halifax for repairs. At the time she and HMCS MARGAREE were out testing these repairs and that is the only reason they were in the area. If

it had not been for that, it is highly unlikely the crew in MAURICE DESGAGNES would have been rescued. CCGS DARING was twenty-two miles away when the MARUICE DESGAGNES sank. She would have been of little use had she been on the scene. These same high seas killed the crew in the RAIFUKU MARU fifty-five years previous in the same area. They were unable to get clear in their lifeboats and it is unlikely that the crew of MAURICE DESGAGNES could have done any better. In order for a helicopter to go that far off the coast, she needs a ship in the area in order to land if necessary. DARING was not equipped for helicopters and the helicopters in the Coast Guard were not powerful enough to execute such a mission. Therefore, it had to be the Navy or not at all.

The Coast Station nearest a distress took charge of the communications and did all possible to assist years ago. The person in charge of the station lived nearby and he was called out to take charge of the communications. At this time RCC was in charge of these incidents and at the time was receiving some severe criticism especially on the West Coast. Our illustrious leaders did not appear to know what they were doing. Like so many Canadian Captains involved in accidents at that time, Captain Gabriel Cote was put in a position that no one should have found himself. Whose fault was it? If those Canadian Captains and Mates had refused to sail those ships without good Radio Officers the ships would have been equipped with them. Those who demand respect get respect.

After this accident the Desgagnes Shipping Company purchased the ESKIMO from Canada Steamships. They renamed her MATHILDE DESGAGNES and she retained her VYJN call sign. The MATHILDE DESGAGNES replaced the MAURICE DESGAGNES and she carried a Radio Officer while sailing past Nova Scotia on her first few voyages. Apparently a lesson was not learned from the MAURICE DESGAGNES because MATHILDE DESGAGNES sailed past Nova Scotia without a Radio Officer on board during January 1982. She was in ballast at the time and was coming from Venezuela direct to Newcastle, New Brunswick, arriving there on January 17th, 1982.

CAPE BEAVER AND MARGARET JANE

On July 31st, 1980, the Canadian fishing vessel CAPE BEAVER was outbound from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, in thick fog. Fog is no stranger to this coast especially during the summer. Inbound to Lunenburg was the Canadian fishing vessel MARGARET JANE, a wooden scallop dragger coming in from a routine fishing trip. These two vessels collided and MARGARET JANE sank within minutes of the collision. Less than three minutes to be exact. When one realizes that CAPE BEAVER has a bulbous bow and is ice strengthened, MARGARET JANE did well to last a few minutes. The MARGARET JANE had eighteen men on board and of these, four were injured and four more were never found. One of these four missing was a sixteen year old high school student who had been spending his summer holiday working in MARGARET JANE.

After the investigation and court of inquiry, the owner of MARGARET JANE and the owner of CAPE BEAVER were both fined. Captain Robert Mayo of MARGARET JANE and Captain Morris Nowe of CAPE BEAVER received a few months' suspension and a fine. I do not know either Captain but I certainly hope their employers paid their personal fines. Both held fishing master certificates that had been given to them because they had years of experience when Canada created these certificates about 1975. In other words, if these companies are not going to pay for proper education they should be fined, if for no other reason than to pay for the high cost of these investigations and inquiries.



Gerrie Grevatt

FV CAPE BEAVER



Gerrie Grevatt

Looking aft from the wheelhouse in FV CAPE BEAVER



Gerrie Grevatt

Captain Morris Nowe at the main steering position in the wheelhouse of FV CAPE BEAVER



Gerrie Grevatt

The main control panel for the winches located in the wheelhouse of FV CAPE BEAVER

I do not agree with the suspensions handed each Captain. I am firmly convinced they were victims of the system, especially Captain Morris Nowe. Fate was against Captain Nowe on July 31st, 1980, as much as it was for Captain Smith of the TITANIC on April 15th, 1912. From research for this project I have found articles written of Captain Nowe's expertise in foreign publications. If he was not the best fishing master on the East Coast of Canada, he was definitely one of the best. The awful experience both captains had to live with should be plenty. There is no need to add insult to injury.

CAPE BEAVER was the first of six new wet fish stern trawlers built for this company. Three were built in Japan (CAPE BEAVER was the first) and three more were built at Halifax, Nova Scotia. These large fishing vessels were no longer boats but were ships in every sense of the terminology. They were sailing with all the fleets of the world through some of the poorest weather found anywhere. They should have been operated accordingly. As far as I was concerned CAPE BEAVER was nothing more than an accident looking for a place to happen. She had no provision for a good Radio Officer or a Navigating Officer. With my limited knowledge of the duties of a navigating officer I find it difficult that within the operation of CAPE BEAVER and her sisters there was a definite need for the Captain to have someone of the caliber of the Second Mate Foreign Going Certificate to rely on. Possibly the holder of this certificate should be the Mate of the vessel, one who is on the ladder of elevation to the Captain's berth. If one ever runs into a super tanker, cruise ship, or vessels of similar design, it will be causing a lot of grief to holders of certificates of a much higher caliber.

On July 31st, 1980, the CAPE BEAVER was on her maiden voyage out of Lunenburg with an assortment of people on board savoring the publicity surrounding this new addition to the fleet. The most fault-prone vessel is the new one. The old girl wallowing along to the ship breaker's yard will not cause near the

problems a new one will. With the old one the crew can recognize the worn bits and pieces and more or less know where the faults will occur. With a new vessel these faults occur with maddening frequency until all the components settle in and mesh together. The crews are strangers in their own environment in a new vessel. Often the multitude of new gadgets have never been seen or operated before. The old familiar ones need time to inform the crew of their own peculiarities. The crew of any new vessel can tell many stories of these problems. The main radio station quit on leaving the shipyard and the Radio Officer could not get it operating during her maiden voyage, therefore no communication from one ship I sailed in. The galley deck head fell down making it most inconvenient for the cooks in another. All new ships are subject to these malfunctions.

The CAPE BEAVER had a multitude of new electronics on board and Captain Nowe, whether he knew this particular make and model or not, had no idea how it would perform until he had the opportunity of living with it for a time. On top of this, his vessel was literally louzy with the Chiefs from the main office, the ones who have an endless list of questions to be answered and of course Captain Nowe did not have time to answer them. Because they were his masters, he had no way of getting rid of them while he figured out the answers. He had no Radio Officer hovering over these new pieces of “fang dangled” equipment to make sure the statements they were making were the truth or even near the truth. He had no Navigating Officer to help him determine his exact position at any given time. Only one who has been in similar situations can appreciate the full meaning of the word “alone” at a time like this.

I handled all the communications at the VCS station involved with this incident. My superiors asked for a written brief shortly afterwards. I did this brief with a stack of legal size paper and my old typewriter at home. I was so mad and frustrated when I reached page fifty-six, I signed off and passed it in. There has been no indication that any of my suggestions were considered.

Captain Nowe had the receivers turned off by turning the volume control down. This was the most obvious fault surrounding the initial call. He was certainly correct in that move. The last thing he needed in CAPE BEAVER that day was the routine chatter and noise from his radio equipment. Captain Nowe’s first move was for his ship and those in the water right after the accident happened. It was over forty minutes after the accident before he had time to alert help. His transmitter was working fine but it was not until his third call to me that he realized that his volume control was down and he could not hear my answering his calls. Fortunately at the time I had nothing to do. I had just finished my lunch at noon when I received his calls. He stated it was an emergency call so this did nothing to move me at a faster pace. It did bring back many memories of the false emergency calls I have handled over the years. Some of them have been quite humorous since it is human nature to try and speed the routine of life up a bit for one’s personal gain. Had he used the proper radio terminology of MAYDAY, the gears would have jumped into high in a hurry. Actually we shifted to the working channel bearing Canadian channel designation fifty-nine, at Captain Nowe’s suggestion, and it was there he stated there had been an accident and that the MARGARET JANE had sunk. My first impression on learning this was that I wanted him to tell me that MARGARET JANE was a small inland fishing vessel with only one or two on board. I had no knowledge of the MARGARET JANE although I tried to know all the vessels I worked. We had never made contact with this one because she worked to the west of us and was in the habit of using station VAU Yarmouth. Captain Nowe, although slightly nervous which is understandable certainly knew what he was doing. He had the number of men who were in MARGARET JANE the number he had rescued, the number still missing, and gave this to me during our first contact. As soon as I realized the seriousness of the situation, I contacted the Rescue Coordination Centre on the Hot Line to their office. Because of the many empires, I managed to dial the wrong number, the one written on the phone. I got the military duty officer whereas I should have had the civilian coast guard officer. This military officer handled everything and did not make me aware of this petty detail until some time later. When he did the VCS station was fortunate they kept that phone. It would have been with great pleasure to watch that phone sail out among our antennas. I feel I could have managed the feat with one good swing that would include driving it through the double panes of glass in the window. There were so many petty empires that you did not know at times whether you were coming or going.

Naturally my superiors wanted a description and the colours of both vessels. As far as I was concerned they could describe the MARGARET JANE any way they wanted and paint her any colour they desired. At a time like that I was not going to trouble the Captain for any such detail. I described the CAPE BEAVER

from her drawings I had managed to locate and memorize. I painted her company colours accordingly, including the design or crest she should be wearing on her funnels. The detail on file at the VCS station for a CAPE BEAVER was the old namesake of the new one that had call sign VDTs. It occurred to me that this might be the old one so I asked Captain Nowe for the call sign of the vessel. He did not know it and could not find it. So then I asked him to confirm that this was the new vessel built recently in Japan. He stated it was. When the special delivery crew brought this vessel from Japan, we had routine message traffic for her and were told her call sign was VY2505. We never made contact with her. From calling her so many times I had this call sign memorized and recorded it as such. Since this incident the CAPE BEAVER was assigned call sign VCSV. It was something so simple, yet so confusing at a time like that.

Time stops for nothing. Captain Nowe needs medical help for the four injured men and he needs as many vessels as possible to search the scene through the fog to make certain those four missing men are not hanging on to some wreckage. The clock has ticked on and over forty minutes has elapsed before Captain Nowe could alert us. Forty minutes the other vessels could have used to steam towards him. A short time before this accident two Japanese fishing vessels collided and one sank not so far from this very position. The Japanese Radio Officers not only alerted us the moment it happened but kept us well informed until they knew they had rescued all on board the sinking vessel. No lives were lost. Their English was on a par with our Japanese – they knew no English and we knew no Japanese. Because they were able to use radiotelegraph we had perfect communications. Compare this accident with any of ours.

As soon as I realized the seriousness of the accident involving the CAPE BEAVER I asked Captain Nowe to switch his radio back to frequency 2182 kHz and then asked every vessel to remain on that frequency. When one vessel spoke to another, we all knew what they were saying and did not have to ask for any unnecessary repetition. There were so many radios then that you could have a couple communicating on General Radio Service (Citizens Band), a couple more on the very high frequency radios, until you reached a point where no one knew what the hell was happening. Within a few minutes we had any number of vessels steaming at full speed towards the area. You could almost feel the main engines being pushed to their limits of endurance. To name a few; we had Captain Gordon Reyno coming out of Liverpool with the Patrol Boat CRATENA call sign VC2457, Captain Murray Garrison coming out of Sambro with Lifeboat 117. The CAPE JOHN call sign VC6178, a sister of CAPE BEAVER out of Lunenburg. The other I remember was a new fishing vessel alongside Riverport, the L. R. MACDONALD. Those at the fish plant realized they had enough talent to get this vessel moving. This make-shift crew jumped aboard her and lit out. No one aboard her was a regular member of her crew. The Captain did not know her call sign, could not find it, and was not sure she even had one. What the heck! She was help, and help was needed. Since Murray Garrison was senior rescue vessel he could take charge when he got there, and sort it out accordingly as he ran to the scene. If I remember correctly CAPE JOHN was first at the scene which permitted CAPE BEAVER to run for port. Some of those four injured men were suffering from shock by the time CAPE JOHN arrived. In the meantime there was sufficient confusion to literally drive one up the wall. At the time CCGS TUPPER was alongside Dartmouth and had recently been fitted with a new radio for 2182 kHz. One of the Mates had to play with this new toy that was apparently not working. She wanted a radio test on 2182 kHz and all I could get out of her was the statement that she could not hear me very well. The CRATENA was a small wooden vessel and I was having no trouble communicating with her so there was definitely nothing wrong with my equipment. Trying to get the TUPPER to terminate this interference was a problem. She stopped as I reached for the phone to call the Dartmouth base and have someone put an end to it. If one had been in American waters and asked for a test on 2182 kHz, the duty U. S. Coast Guard Radioman would have virtually climbed out of your speaker and thumped you. It was illegal to do this on 2182 kHz in their waters and it was a law well founded for the very reason I am trying to describe here. Why we had to tolerate that foolishness is beyond me.

There was another choice piece of inefficiency and the most frustrating of all during this accident. This inefficiency was the military helicopters that were forever flip flopping around this coast. Apparently there were two or three of these machines in the air most of the time. We could not communicate with them. The American machines not only communicated on 2182 kHz, they could take bearings of the signals they heard on that frequency. I have described this via a personal experience off Cuba and have recorded it on these pages. The only way we at the VCS station could communicate with those military machines was through a fixed wing aircraft, normally a DeHavilland Buffalo that would switch over to us on 2182 kHz

then relay our communication via their military frequencies. When this accident happened, the Buffalo aircraft flying with these helicopters was getting low on fuel and had to return to Shearwater. They must have been unable to locate their credit card, broke the handle on their wobble pump, or noticed a chip in the paint and stopped for repairs. At least I never made contact with it again. But the helicopters remained in the area. At least one of them switched her sensing devices from Russian A-bombs to fishing vessels and managed to locate the CAPE BEAVER. At least three times she went right over the CAPE BEAVER and Captain Nowe became very excited. She represented a very fast means of getting these four injured men to medical attention. Captain Nowe yelled at me to tell her that she was directly overhead. How? I would have gladly fired a shot into her engine and dropped her on the CAPE BEAVER's Monkey Island had this been possible and the duty military officer at the Rescue Coordination Centre told me he had communication with this helicopter via the Shearwater Air Base. I not only relayed Captain Nowe's requests but made up a few questions of my own just to see how much communication we had. The answer was rather obvious – none. We did not receive a reply of any description. These helicopters could have been a welcome addition to this rescue and they are possibly the most important piece of machinery during such incidents. Without direct communication and especially during this accident, they were nothing more than added frustration. Had the pilot of this machine been able to tell us what he was doing it would have been a relief to all concerned. This pilot was probably cursing everything in general for want of this communication. If he had communication with CAPE BEAVER he would have made an attempt at picking up these injured men or else he was of a different caliber than any helicopter pilot I have known.

Another aggravation worthy of mention during this incident is that the Canadian vessel POLARIS 5 was in no position to assist with this incident because of her distance from the scene. She had problems of her own and needed a conversation with those who manufactured this defective equipment. We were unable to make a duplex call because our equipment was tied up with this distress. This was a pet beef of mine for years. The telephone companies should have been providing this service. The Coast Guard Radio Stations should not have had anything to do with it. There were many reasons for this. The telephone companies could have made this into an efficient user pay system and all concerned would have found it much more efficient. Once in operation I would suspect that the telephone traffic would have tripled.

My first trip on salt water was spent in a small fishing vessel while on holiday from school and this was a fantastic experience for any kid so fortunate and an excellent means for them to earn money. If any kid is willing to put in the hard work involved, they will be well paid for the experience. MARGARET JANE had several students within her crew that day.

When the court suspended Captain Nowe and Captain Mayo, they probably did this to tell all fishing masters that it is about time they improved their overall performance. As long as these Captains are willing to do it alone, that is the way it will be. They would soon get help if they refused to sail these vessels without assistance in education and without help in these larger vessels. Those who demand respect get respect and these Fishing Masters certainly deserved much more than they received at that time.

PRINSENDAM

One of the best examples of all that was available to the merchant ship in the form of communications, and exactly how it all worked during a distress situation occurred during October 1980. The Dutch passenger ship PRINSENDAM with call sign PJTA was sailing in the Gulf of Alaska on October 3rd when a fire broke out. This fire destroyed the ship and the 533 passengers and crew had to abandon ship through poor sea conditions.

All marine communication systems available at the time were tried during this distress, but 500 kHz performed so well and effectively that one wondered if there would ever be anything capable of performing as efficiently. Shortly after the Radio Officers in PRINSENDAM sent their auto alarm signal and distress call on 500 kHz, forty or fifty ships checked in immediately, and more kept checking in as the distress communications continued. One ship was more than 2,800 miles from the distress scene.

The American tanker WILLIAMSBURGH with call sign WGOA was one of the first ships to answer PRINSENDAM's distress. Jim Pfister was Chief Radio Officer in WILLIAMSBURGH and on duty at the time. He alerted his bridge and called his Second Radio Officer David Ring on hearing the auto alarm signal only. WILLIAMSBURGH was the ship nearest the PRINSENDAM and was the first at the scene. The passengers and crew were lifted off PRINSENDAM to the WILLIAMSBURGH.

The PRINSENDAM made an attempt at using her Satellite Communications equipment for this distress but her Captain found himself talking to a medical orderly in a Kodiak hospital. This error was credited to the Radio Officer in PRINSENDAM. Apparently he did not understand the proper procedure for using this equipment to alert help in such a situation. The Canadian government at that time had recently eliminated the Radio Officer in two Canadian ships and replaced them with this same Satellite Communications system. When a Radio Officer who was trained in electronics and distress procedures was unable to properly alert help with one of those units, one wondered how a Canadian Captain or Mate would be able to do any better. Besides when one is in such a situation, he wants communications with the nearest ship. If this were the only means of alerting help and if someone ashore missed one's position by simply one digit, you would not likely ever be found.

The PRINSENDAM insisted on using 500 kHz. That was a smart move on her part. She did not send a distress call on the radiotelephone frequency of 2182 kHz. The WILLIAMSBURGH did go up on this frequency and relay a distress call for her but received only one reply, that from a 65 foot fishing vessel PACIFIC HARVEST. PACIFIC HARVEST was unable to reach PRINSENDAM in time to be of any use because of the high seas. The fishing vessels in that area did not use 2182 kHz. They listened continually to their own company frequency, quite often on the four-megahertz radiotelephone band of frequencies. This was quite common with fishing vessels everywhere to the point it was impossible for them to contact each other when separate companies owned the two vessels that wanted to communicate with each other. We heard complaints of this nature at the VCS station as though we would be able to do something about it.

When a vessel is in distress she wants to communicate with the nearest vessel to her in case evacuation is necessary. She wants to do this on a frequency that can be heard by all including the nearest coast stations. She wants to do this so that anything that is transmitted can be understood. There were many languages involved with the ships answering the PRINSENDAM's distress including Japanese and Russian. But all knew exactly what was taking place because the Radio Officers were using radiotelegraph and the service abbreviations known as the Q Code. Another asset during a distress situation was to be able to home in on the communications at the distress scene via radio direction finders. A ship or an aircraft could home in on these signals and make certain they were traveling towards the scene, in case an error had been made in the position of the scene. The nature of 500 kHz made this facet more efficient than any other frequency available.

PRINSENDAM's satellite communications equipment failed shortly after the fire proved to warrant a distress situation – about one hour into the distress communications. This was caused from a loss of electric power to the equipment. Many who had sailed with this equipment at that time claimed that it was highly unlikely this equipment would have been of much use had there been a source of emergency power for that equipment. The most difficult problem the engineers had to overcome in designing this equipment for shipboard use was the mechanism that kept the antenna pointed at the satellite in use. Apparently the unit would track the satellite from the roll of the ship with little trouble, but would not work from the pitch of the ship. It was not until 1975 that they felt this problem had been rectified to the point that it was feasible to install these units in ships. Those who had sailed with this equipment at that time claimed it was still a problem and that they were fair weather units only. In any ship fitted at the time, those units had the habit of losing contact with the satellite when the ship was experiencing heavy motion. It was a rather poor excuse for distress communications because a distress did not normally happen when the ship was experiencing smooth sailing. Often a distress incident is the result of poor weather.

The last two to three hours of PRINSENDAM's communications was conducted via one very high frequency "walkie-talkie" radiotelephone and emergency equipment on 500 kHz. The electric power cables to all the other communications equipment had been burned off. When I was at sea I often used the battery powered emergency equipment on 500 kHz as routine communications equipment. I did this to ensure that

the equipment was in good working condition. I found the range and reliability of those low powered units amazing. A very high frequency radiotelephone “walkie-talkie” was a very handy piece of equipment. The Mates were beginning to rely on those units for communications with the Captain or bridge for routine shipboard activities.

Any communications system has to be well used in order to be reliable as a system for distress communications. The equipment has to be used often during routine communications to ensure the operators are very familiar with the equipment. It has to be used on a frequency that most operators are listening when a distress transmission is made. 500 kHz was by far the most efficient frequency for distress because so many were monitoring at any given time in any given area. It also eliminated any language problem, provided a very good range and was most suitable for radio direction finders. The list of items in favour of this frequency appeared unlimited. I found the most serious fault with the Aeradio main distress frequency of 121.5 megahertz was the fact it was used for distress communications only. This was from years of experience with these stations. On occasion the equipment on this frequency would not work from a simple lack of use. I know of one case where this was a serious fault.

The loss of PRINSENDAM certainly provided a very good first hand experience for any administration that desired some basic guideline for making any decision concerning marine communications. How many Canadian ships were within range and capable of providing some assistance to PRINSENDAM but did not know of her distress mainly because it was impossible to make them aware of her predicament? Any ship that did not carry a proper radio officer and the equipment for 500 kHz radiotelegraph at that time was unsafe.



United States Coast Guard

The PRINSENDAM wreck prior to sinking



Radio Officer David Ring, Marshfield, Massachusetts

Left to right: Radio Officers, Jack Van Der Zee, PRINSENDAM, Jim Pfister N6CF and David Ring N1EA, WILLIAMSBURG. This photograph was taken aboard TT WILLIAMSBURG after taking aboard the passengers and crew of PRINSENDAM.



Dynacolor Graphics Inc., Miami, Florida

This is the T/T WILLIAMSBURG off San Francisco October 12th, 1981, bound for the East Coast of the United States via Cape Horn. (225,090 DWT)



Dynacolor Graphics Inc., Miami, Florida

A stern view of TT WILLIAMSBURG

JFBX



Mitchell S. Roscoe

The crews in the Japanese fishing fleet were well trained and well equipped but they still had to tolerate the human factor. May 4th, 2003 was a beautiful day when JFBX departed Halifax, Nova Scotia for the fishing grounds. After the pilot departed the vessel the duty mate set the vessels main engines for normal cruising and went below for a cup of tea, thinking the automatic pilot was on and working properly. The automatic pilot had not been turned on and one can just picture the ring of tea on the deckhead when JFBX 'fetched up'. We were unable to learn if the captain and this mate had to report to the nearest hospital so the captain could get his boot removed and the mate get his butt repaired.



Canadian Coast Guard

THE CANADIAN CERTIFICATE AND A COMPARISON WITH OTHER NATIONS

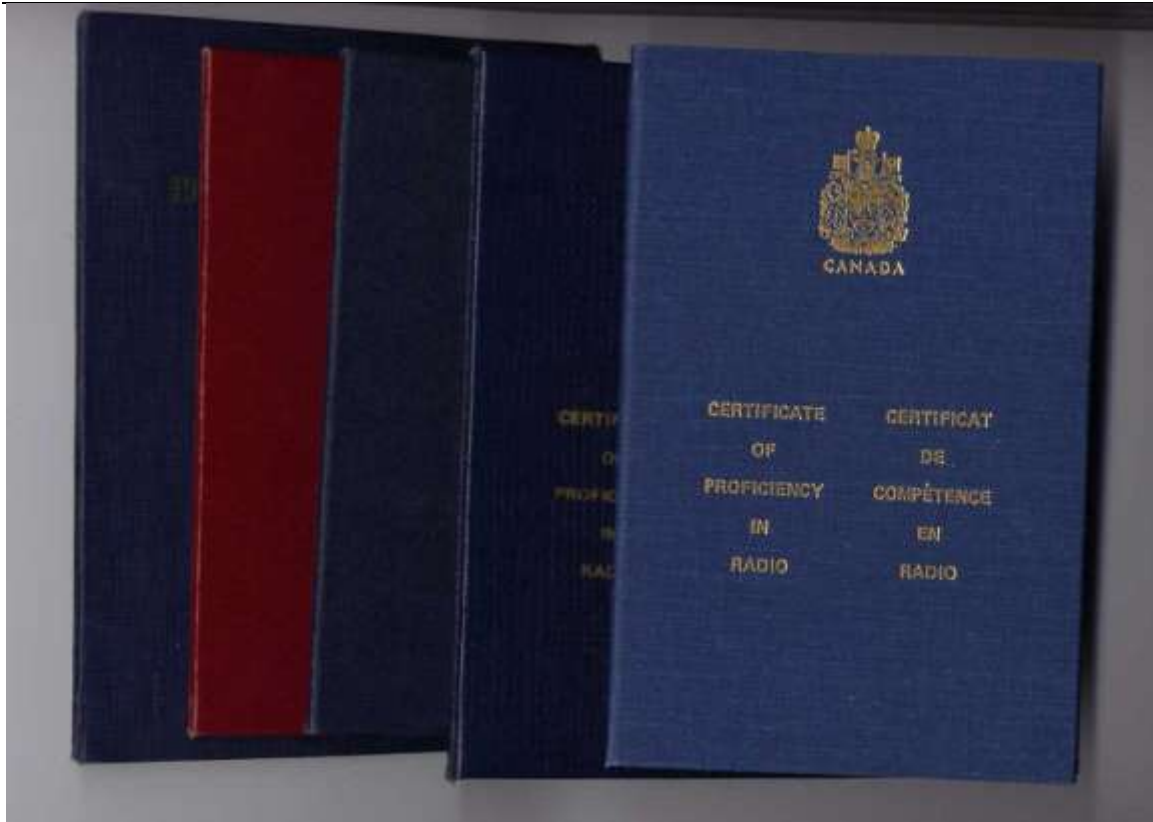
When you spend some time looking back through the history of this communications in Canada, at least most of these peculiarities you encounter become better understood. The termination of our certificates in 1966 had the adverse effect of lowering this trade to one of semi-skilled labour. You have to compare what we had with that of the rest of the world. This will give one some idea of where we stood in comparison to the rest of the world. To begin with the creation of the certificates in 1912 was done of necessity.

Something had to be done in order to police and regulate this trade. There were no rules of any description so no one knew what was operating these stations. Many of the operators were reaching the point of pure frustration in trying to communicate with their equipment, and if for any reason some operator was bored or just plain rude, it was not unusual for him to tune his transmitter and leave it on creating as much interference as possible. The language over the air was getting out of hand. Therefore, the certificates were created to give some indication that the holder knew what he was doing. Also it was an added advantage to know that he could lose this certificate if he failed to abide by the rules and regulations. These certificates were broken up into various grades, or classes, in order to indicate the level of the holder's competency.

The last spark certificates were issued in 1928 and all Canadian operators had to report to a radio inspector in 1929 in order to be examined for the new continuous wave certificates. For example, Cec Foster passed his examinations and received his certificate in 1928, a spark certificate and had to be re-examined in 1929 for a new certificate, the c/w certificate.

After World War II the prospective operator had a choice of equipment, either the British Marconi or the American Radio Corporation of America stations that were fitted in ships during the period of his examinations. The reason for this was twofold. The first was that there had not been a Canadian company

that produced these stations since the Canadian Marconi Company terminated production of these stations around World War II. The second is that there were two types available for instruction in the various schools across Canada. Some of these schools used Marconi equipment and some used the American RCA equipment. For many years the exact type or model of equipment you could use were listed in the syllabus of examinations. But the one printed in June 1969 stated marine radio equipment of an approved type.



These are the certificates I have accumulated over the years. Left to right: my Continuous Certificate of Discharge for Seamen, my second class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, my original First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, my second First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio and my Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate. Our certificates were the reverse of the British Certificates. Our second class was red in colour and our first class was blue in colour. The British second class was blue and the first class was red.

CERTIFICATE Of Crew and Official Log Book Report of Character				68761
No.	Name of Ship and Official Number and Tonnage	Date and Place of		Rating
		Engagement	Discharge	
1	M-3 BOUNTY 312725 G.T. 415.52 N.T. 110.98	May 15 1962 Hull, N.S.	Dec 5 1962 Hull, N.S.	Radio Officer
2	S/S GYPSUM COUNTES LONDON O. N. 302825 N.T. 4020 H.P. 3000	Sept. 25 1970 HANTSBERG, N.S.	Oct. 9 1970 HANTSBERG, N.S.	-DO-
3	Gypsum Queen Off. No. 302829 - London Net 4223 Gross 7883 H.P. 2700	Oct 9 1970 HANTSBERG	Nov 27 1970 HANTSBERG	DO
4	Gypsum Prince Off. No. 302828 - London Net 4223 Gross 7883 H.P. 2700	Dec. 1 70 HANTSBERG	Dec. 12 70 HANTSBERG	DO
5	Gypsum Empress Off. No. 302827 - London Net 4223 Gross 8180 H.P. 3000	Jan 5 1971 HANTSBERG	Jan 15 1971 HANTSBERG	-DO-
6	Gypsum Queen Off. No. 302829 - London Net 4223 Gross 7883 H.P. 2700	Jan 23 1971 HANTSBERG	Feb 9 1971 HANTSBERG	DO

* These columns are to be filled in at time of engagement.
† Particulars of vessel, trade, etc. are to be stated.

Description of Vessel	Report of Character		Signature (1) Officer
	For ability	For General Conduct	
Foreign going	V.G.	V.G.	(1) [Signature]
DO	V.G.	V.G.	(2) [Signature]
DO	V.G.	V.G.	(3) [Signature]
DO	V.G.	V.G.	(4) [Signature]
DO	V.G.	V.G.	(5) [Signature]
DO	V.G.	V.G.	(6) [Signature]

When a member of the crew of an inland or minor water vessel is transferred to another vessel than to the possession of a Shipping Master, or Commander of a vessel, or to a Shipping Master, the witness to the discharge shall state his name and occupation in the space marked (2) in the right hand column above.

These are some of the entries in my Continuous Certificate of Discharge for Seamen.

Canada

This Certificate, unless previously withdrawn by the Minister of Transport, will continue to be valid so long as the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Montreux, 1965) shall remain in force.

No. 4-18

CANADA

CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN RADIO
Granted by the Minister of Transport under the provisions of the Radio Act.
SECOND CLASS

This is to certify that Spurgeon George Roscoe
has been examined in accordance with the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Geneva, 1959), and has qualified in:

- Knowledge of the general principles of electricity and of the theory of radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony;
- The adjustment, care and operation of equipment;
- Transmitting and sound reading in the International Morse Code at a speed of not less than 20 words a minute in plain language and 16 words a minute in code groups;
- Transmitting and receiving correctly messages by telephone;
- Knowledge of national and international regulations governing radiocommunication.

The holder of this certificate is bound by the provisions of the Radio Act to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.


J. B. Fisher
Examining Officer

9th February, 1962.

The holder of this certificate may act, subject to complying with medical fitness requirements if necessary, as a radiotelegraph or radiotelephone operator on any class of radio station indicated on the inside of the cover hereof.

L. G. Collins
Minister of Transport

This is inside my Second Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio.

	
The holder of this Certificate may act:	
(1) As a radio operator on any class of radio station, except as a radiotelegraph operator on an aircraft engaged in international flights;	
(2) In charge of a Canadian ship radio station of the third category.	
The holder may also act in charge of a ship station of the Second category provided this Certificate is countersigned by a Canadian Government Radio Inspector who thereby certifies that the holder has been employed for six months as radio operator on a radio station in the International Maritime Mobile Service and has submitted documentary proof to this effect.	
Countersigned	<i>C. C. Foster</i> Radio Inspector
Date	<i>20th Dec 1962</i>
	Official Stamp
NOTICE	
This Certificate shall be signed by the holder in the presence of either—a Justice of the Peace, a Notary Public or a Canadian or other British Radio Inspector, who will check the photograph and description, and sign his name.	
In case of misconduct or breach of the regulations on the part of the holder, the Minister may, at his discretion, endorse or withdraw this Certificate. Unless so withdrawn, it will continue to be valid as long as the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Geneva, 1959) shall remain in force.	
This Certificate should be carefully preserved. In case of loss the Minister may issue a duplicate certificate, upon production of satisfactory evidence under oath that the original has been lost or destroyed, upon payment of the sum of \$1.00.	
In the event of loss of this Certificate, by its owner, any person coming into possession thereof should transmit it forthwith to the Director, Telecommunications and Electronics Branch, Department of Transport, Ottawa, Canada.	

Signature of holder: *Cecil C. Foster*
Witness: *Albert S. Jones J.P.*

DESCRIPTION OF HOLDER

Place of Birth *Kentville, Kings County,*
Nova Scotia, Canada.

Date of Birth *2nd May, 1939.*

Height *6* feet *4½* inches

Colour of (a) Eyes *Hazel* (b) Hair *Brown*

Complexion *Fair*

Special Peculiarities *None.*

This is the inside of my old Second Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio and shows where Mr. Cecil C. Foster countersigned this for ships of the second category. Cec Foster served during the "hay day" of this trade. His first certificate in 1928 was a spark certificate. In 1929 all radio operators had to report to a Radio Inspector and write a continuous wave certificate. Cec joined the Department of Transport in 1930 and retired 38 years later as a Radio Inspector in 1968. Cec had operated the stations in rum-running vessels from 1928 until 1930. On retirement he operated amateur radio station VE1AMF.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

In recognition of the holder's competency, the
validity of this certificate is hereby extended for
a period of five years from JULY 4, 1977



C. E. Doherty
Radio Inspector



CANADA

No. 6-89

CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN RADIO

Granted by the Minister of Communications under the provisions of the Radio Act.

FIRST CLASS

This is to certify that, Spurgeon George Roscoe
has been examined in accordance with the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Montreux, 1965), and has qualified in:

- (a) Knowledge of the general principles of electricity and of the theory of radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony;
- (b) The adjustment, care and operation of equipment;
- (c) Transmitting and sound reading in the International Morse Code at a speed of not less than 25 words a minute in plain language and 20 words a minute in code groups;
- (d) Transmitting and receiving correctly messages by telephone;
- (e) Knowledge of national and international regulations governing radiocommunication.

The holder of this certificate is bound by the provisions of the Radio Act to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.

O. R. Mosher
O.R. Mosher
Examining Officer

22 July 1975

The holder of this certificate may act, subject to complying with medical fitness requirements if necessary, as a radiotelegraph or radiotelephone operator on any class of radio station (except as a radiotelegraph operator on an aircraft engaged in international flights) or in charge of a coast, land or ship station of any class or category.

[Signature]
for Minister of Communications

This is inside my original First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio.



Signature of holder *S. L. H. Ross*
Witness *A. J. Bryant*

DESCRIPTION OF HOLDER

Date of Birth 02 May 1939
Place of Birth Kentville, Nova Scotia
Height 6 feet 4 1/2 inches
Colour of (a) Eyes Hazel (b) Hair Brown
Complexion Medium
Special Peculiarities None

NOTICE

This Certificate shall be signed by the holder in the presence of either:—a Justice of the Peace, a Notary Public or a Canadian or other British Radio Inspector, who will check the photograph and description, and sign his name.

In case of misconduct or breach of the regulations on the part of the holder, the Minister may, at his discretion, endorse or withdraw this Certificate. Unless so withdrawn, it will continue to be valid so long as the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Montreux, 1965) shall remain in force.

This Certificate should be carefully preserved. In case of loss the Minister may issue a duplicate certificate, upon production of satisfactory evidence under oath that the original has been lost or destroyed, upon payment of the sum of \$1.00.

In the event of loss of this Certificate, by its owner, any person coming into possession thereof should transmit it forthwith to the Director, Telecommunications and Electronics Branch, Department of Transport, Ottawa, Canada.

41-2092
6-66

In the back of all of these certificates it contained a recent photograph and description of the holder of the certificate. This is inside the back of my original First Class Certificate. I show this in black and white to make it easier for one to read because everything around here is getting rather ancient. To be truthful about it this certificate fell apart when I went to scan it and I had to re glue it.



Government of Canada
Département des Communications

Gouvernement du Canada
Ministère des Communications

Replaces First Class Certificate

no. 6-89 issued July 22, 1975

validated July 4, 1977

No. 6-108

**CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN RADIO
FIRST CLASS**

SPURGEON GEORGE ROSCOE

under the provisions of the Radio Act, has been examined in accordance with the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention and is qualified to act as a radiotelegraph or radiotelephone operator

- (a) on any class of radio station;
(b) in charge of a coast, land or ship station of any class or category.

This certificate is valid for a period of five years from the date of issue.

Date of issue
Date de délivrance **Sept. 7, 1982**

In recognition of the holder's competency, the validity of this certificate is hereby extended for a period of five years

from
à compter de

The holder is bound to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.

The Minister of Communications may revoke or suspend this certificate if the holder has been guilty of misconduct, or has wilfully or negligently failed to comply with the Regulations.

**CERTIFICAT DE COMPÉTENCE EN RADIO
PREMIÈRE CLASSE**

en vertu des dispositions de la Loi sur la radio, a subi avec succès les épreuves prévues par le Règlement des radiocommunications annexé à la Convention internationale des télécommunications et il est apte à exercer les fonctions d'opérateur radiotélégraphiste ou radiotéléphoniste

- a) d'une station radio de n'importe quelle catégorie;
b) chef de poste de n'importe quelle station côtière, terrestre ou de navire de n'importe quelle classe ou catégorie.

Le présent certificat est valide pour une période de cinq ans à compter de la date de délivrance.

Issued by
Agent délivreur

En reconnaissance de la compétence du titulaire du présent certificat, la validité de ce dernier est prolongée pour une période de cinq années.

Radio Inspector
Inspecteur de la Radio

Le titulaire du présent certificat est tenu de garder le secret de la correspondance.

Le Ministre des Communications peut révoquer ou suspendre le présent certificat si le titulaire est trouvé coupable d'inconduite ou s'il a enfreint le règlement volontairement ou par négligence.

This is my second First Class Certificate and the one that replaced my original First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio. One can now see that we are in both official languages in Canada. Things are getting rather sloppy because the Radio Inspector that issued this certificate did not sign it.

CLASS I. Ships carrying more than 250 passengers or in respect of which there is in force a certificate issued by the Department of Trade and Industry, or by any authority empowered in that behalf by the laws of any country other than the United Kingdom, to the effect that they are fit to carry more than 250 passengers, and which:

- (a) in the case of British ships registered in the United Kingdom are at sea for more than sixteen hours between two consecutive ports;
- (b) in the case of ships other than British ships registered in the United Kingdom, arrive at a port in the United Kingdom having been at sea for more than sixteen hours since last leaving port, or in respect of which clearance or transire is sought from a port in the United Kingdom for a voyage requiring more than sixteen hours at sea before reaching port.

CLASS II. (a) Passenger ships other than those of Class I.

(b) Cargo ships of 1,600 gross tons and upwards.

CLASS III. Cargo ships of 500 gross tons and upwards but of less than 1,600 gross tons.

CLASS IV. Cargo ships of 300 gross tons and upwards but of less than 500 gross tons.

FISHING BOATS. Seagoing fishing boats of more than 140 feet in length registered in the United Kingdom.


Class I and Class II ships are required to be equipped with radiotelegraphy; Class III ships, Class IV ships and fishing boats of more than 140 feet are required to be equipped with either radiotelegraphy or radiotelephony.

(3) It is necessary that first and second class radiotelegraph operators' certificates of competence issued by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications should show when the holder has completed six months', twelve months' and two years' service as operator on board ship. Operators should therefore present their certificates to a Radio Surveyor for endorsement as and when the foregoing service qualifications have been obtained.

This is page 17 from the "Handbook for Radio Operators" a book published by the British Post Office and the book we used in Canada as a text book at the various radio schools. One can see that the various categories as listed in our certificates are called a class in this document. The handbook I scanned for this illustration was the 1968 Edition. This was the thirteenth edition and included the second impression incorporating Amendment No. 1, September, 1971 so was actually printed by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1971. Most of us carried this handbook and had it well worn.

 Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada		No. 054	
COAST GUARD RADIOTELEGRAPH OPERATOR'S CERTIFICATE		CERTIFICAT DE RADIOTÉLÉGRAPHISTE DE LA GARDE CÔTIÈRE	
(Holder) <i>Spurgeon G. Roscoe</i> under the provisions of the Radiocommunication Act has been examined in accordance with the Radio Operator Certificate Regulations (ROCR) and is qualified to act as a radiotelegraph and radiotelephone operator on any class of Coast Guard land or ship radio station.		(Titulaire) en vertu des dispositions de la Loi sur la Radiocommunication, a subi avec succès les épreuves prévues par le Règlement sur les certificats d'opérateur radio (RCOR) et il est apte à exercer les fonctions de radiotélégraphiste et de radiotéléphoniste d'une station côtière ou d'une station de navire de n'importe quelle catégorie.	
This certificate is valid for a period of five years from the date of issue:		Le présent certificat est valide pour une période de cinq ans à compter de la date de délivrance.	
Date of issue 93/12/01 Date de délivrance		Issued by <i>[Signature]</i> Agent délivreur <small>Director General Telecommunications and Electronics Directeur Général Télécommunications et Électronique</small>	
In recognition of the holder's competency, the validity of this certificate is hereby extended for a period of five years.		En reconnaissance de la compétence du titulaire du présent certificat, la validité de ce dernier est prolongée pour une période de cinq années.	
From à compter de		Issuing Officer Agent délivreur	
The holder is bound to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.		Le titulaire du présent certificat est tenu de garder le secret de la correspondance.	
The Minister may revoke or suspend this certificate if the holder has been guilty of misconduct, or has wilfully or negligently failed to comply with the Regulations.		Le Ministre peut révoquer ou suspendre le présent certificat si le titulaire est trouvé coupable d'inconduite ou s'il a enfreint le Règlement volontairement ou par négligence.	

This is my Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate.

	McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center 3939 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, D. C.
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT Spurgeon G. Roscoe H0110-J3 MH HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED OUR COURSE COMPLETE COMMUNICATIONS ELECTRONICS WITH FCC LICENSE AND HAS THIS DAY BEEN AWARDED A DIPLOMA	
July 24, 1975 Date	<i>[Signature]</i> President

Of the few Canadian radio operators who bothered to take additional electronic training most seem to have taken the same course. This is my graduation card but unfortunately we did not receive the FCC License. I managed to pass my First Class Certificate from this course.

New first class certificates were not issued after April 1st, 1976, and were replaced by the Radiocommunication Operator's General Certificate (Maritime), abbreviated to RGMC. The first students

for instruction in the RGMC commenced classes in our only radio school left in September 1979. The only radio school left in Canada teaching this subject was Institut Maritime du Quebec, Rimouski, Quebec, in French language only.

The RGMC came about from changes made within the regulations of the International Telecommunication Union during the late 1960's. Naturally the first nations to get this new certificate issued to their radio operators were the large seafaring nations. The British RGMC or General Certificate as they called it was first issued in the spring of 1971. Australia brought about her General Certificate at the same time as Canada and their first students were receiving instruction in 1979. Germany was to follow with their General Certificate shortly after that date.

The Canadian second class certificate was still available to anyone who wanted to sit for examination for a few years after the introduction of the RGMC certificate. The equipment for use for the last of the first and second class certificates was at least thirty years old. The American equipment was that making up the RCA 5U console and the various lifeboat radios and direction finders that came with that station. RCA terminated production of marine radio stations around 1960. The British equipment was that produced by the Marconi Company. This was their equipment given the names:

Mercury and Electra Receivers

Seaguard Auto-alarm

Reliance main transmitter

Auto-key automatic keyer

Lodestone direction finder

Salvita lifeboat radio

The first class certificate had the same equipment as for the second-class certificate with addition of:

Oceanspan high frequency transmitter

Salvare motor lifeboat radio

The equipment for these examinations certainly needed upgrading at the time of the introduction of the RGMC certificate. I studied the Marconi equipment at Radio College of Canada, Toronto, and because of this I used this equipment for both my second and first class certificates. I did not sail with any of the equipment I had for both examinations with the exception of the direction finder. Two of the ships I sailed in had the Lodestone direction finder but no one knew when they had been calibrated last. Both were installed in the chart room and were never turned on to my knowledge. Therefore, I did not use much of the advanced theory instruction I received from Mr. George Willby. Much of what he taught us pertained to the relative mess I found myself in on occasion. I often wished I could have recalled his exact words on various subjects.



The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited

This is the Wireless Room on the British General Cargo MV PORT NEW PLYMOUTH, Port Line Limited, London, United Kingdom. This vessel was built in 1960. Her station contains the equipment required for the Canadian 1st Class Certificate. Oceanspan Main Transmitter, Reliance Emergency Transmitter, Mercury and Electra Receivers, Alert Reserve Receiver, Battery Charging and Aerial Switching units. The name of the Radio Officer is unknown.



World Ship Photo Library

PORT NEW PLYMOUTH with international call sign GFXH

The syllabus for the RGMC certificate was most impressive. The RGMC certificate was to be all that was contained in the old first and second-class certificates. The International Telecommunication Union stated that the RGMC certificate was to be equal to or better than the old certificates. The RGMC fit the description better than to the letter. The examination for the RGMC certificate was much the same as for the old second class. The code requirement was the same, twenty words per minute. The theory was more modern with single side band, transistors, and so on. The big difference was the endorsements. The RGMC had two endorsements that required a total of twelve months sea experience. The RGMC certificate ignored coast stations because an international certificate was not required in Canada for these stations after 1966. The first endorsement for the RGMC brought one up to the level of the old second-class certificate countersigned for ships of the second category. The second endorsement in the RGMC brought one up to the level of the old first class certificate. That meant one could be in charge of a ship station of the first category. Canada did not own a ship of the first category when this certificate was created.

The second class certificate was mandatory in order to operate most stations for a period of fifty-four years but that is as far as it went. I know of one case where an operator was told that his certificate was void if he terminated working for the Department of Transport. Therefore, one has to assume that these certificates were more or less handed out in some instances. On the other hand I know of no one who received any disciplinary action taken towards his certificate for a misdemeanor. Therefore, the whole subject of the certificate takes on a rather sour aspect when looked upon realistically. I know of many that received their first second class certificate already countersigned for ships of the second category. In other words it all appears to have been based on politics and a case of who you knew, who you were, and where you were at any given time. So it did not change with the RGMC certificate for the few that wasted the time in getting it.

In order to try to understand this subject better I looked at it from different angles. One thing I wanted to find was a native born Canadian who had made a name in this trade in one way or another. I found no one although many were elevated to the higher positions involved. The two most noteworthy in the country, I would consider, were Mr. C. P. Edwards and Mr. D. V. Carroll. Mr. Edwards came from Wales and Mr. Carroll from England. So many of our illustrious leaders came from the United Kingdom that at times one was tempted to believe their promotion within our ranks was their birthright. Many made an attempt to explain this. I honestly believe the more accurate explanation is that the average Canadian was not about to spend any time in the isolated areas for the little remuneration offered. Therefore, many of these fellows came over and elevated themselves within the ranks and then dragged the others up. I also believe that many of our better operators were among the many that have immigrated to the United States over the years. One older operator went out of his way to state that after World War I so many Canadian operators went to the United States that there were only eighteen left to operate the stations in this country. Not likely a record of this has survived. The question that came to my mind on learning this was not what was wrong with those that left, but what was wrong with those who stayed



Mrs. H. H. MacLean

This is technician H. H. MacLean on a northern run in the late 1930's.



H. H. Brennan

This is some of the crew heading north in CCGS N. B. MCLEAN, 1948 for annual re-staffing and supply of northern radio stations.

Left to right:

1st row: Radio Operator George Sheppard, Cook Dacey

2nd row: Radio Operators Pat Short and Don Stocker, Radio Inspector Harris Brennan, Cooks Cecil Seymour and Les Cooney

3rd row: Radio Operators Art Girroir and Joe Morris, Technician Ernie Pike, Radio Operators Stan Braisill and Pete Melonvitch and Technician Bill Horton

In my estimation the late Mr. H. H. MacLean, a Canadian born and reared on the Magdalene Islands, was a hero, a man of special achievements. Mr. MacLean was known by the rather ambiguous title of Regional Technician for many years and that he was, and a very good one, but not in the sense that we interpret this term. It was normal for him to make a trip north along with the annual re-staffing and supply run for the northern stations. This was conducted by ship for many years, including some years after regular air service was inaugurated to the many isolated Arctic communities. This ship was often the N. B. MACLEAN. She would drop Mr. Maclean off at some isolated spot to install a new radio beacon. This meant that Mr. MacLean would be alone at this site for some weeks until picked up by the same ship. During this time he would clear a site and construct the building, and install the radio equipment, and would have it officially in service. Quite a feat! Today this would involve many men and many departments.

So much of this country is considered arctic wilderness that I felt there should be a story connected with a ship in that area. The most famous of these ships one would have to agree, was the RCMP ST ROCH. The operator in this ship should have been capable of a most interesting yarn when you consider the feat he had to accomplish in carrying out his day to day duties. From a former crewmember I learned this operator's name, and the fact he became an American citizen and an American radio operator. This tells something about the system in general. I have sailed on both the East and West Coasts of the United States in the BOUNTY. During that time I met a number of these former Canadian operators. The publicity surrounding the BOUNTY and her Canadian call sign, VYFM, naturally brought forth a number of these operators.

I tried further, the Canadian merchant vessel that holds the distinction of having gone the farthest north, not an icebreaker for that is designed for that purpose. The merchant ship that has gone farther north in Canada

than any other merchant ship was the Canadian vessel CHESLEY A. CROSBIE with call sign VGQB. She managed to reach Eureka, Ellsmere Island, in the summer of 1972. Who was her Radio Officer on this most adventuresome voyage? She had none. Like so many of the Canadian flag fleet, such as it is, she wandered around wherever she pleased not fitted with radiotelegraph, and she was three hundred tons larger than the international requirements for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) regulations. She undoubtedly made this voyage leaving messages at a number of the stations she passed. The most difficult ship we had to deliver a message was the Canadian flag vessel without the Radio Officer. The only contact we had with them was when the Mate or Master turned on the radio and called us for one reason or another.



Chimo Shipping Limited

MV CHESLEY A. CROSBIE with international call sign VGQB

Learning all these facts, I then made an attempt to try to compare Canadian Radio Operators with those of another country to see if we were running true to form, so to speak. I had had the pleasure of sailing with only two other operators in a merchant ship. I spent about one week with Thomas E. Potts in the GYPSUM COUNTESS and some time later another week with Ian R. Dodd in the GYPSUM QUEEN. Both operators were British and I learned much from the excellent training they had received, which included the six-month period sailing with another operator in order to qualify for the proper endorsement in their certificates. Although most of us made good use of the excellent publication "Handbook for Radio Operators" published by the British government, trying to compare our marine communications with theirs was impossible. They had one of the largest fleets of merchant ships in the world, even though many of them were nothing more than a form of flag of convenience for other nations. Their coastal radio stations were not only literally saturated in communications with their own ships, but the operators on these stations had to have the highest certificates available and several months experience in these ships, prior to their ever being considered for employment at these stations. Practically all the ships in this fleet were more than willing to accommodate junior operators for their six-month experience on first leaving radio school. Everyone needed and should have had this experience, preferably with a senior operator who was willing to spend some time in helping the newer operator. Few Canadian operators were ever so fortunate. As can be seen, there was no way to compare our system of marine communications.

The United States coast stations and ships were operated by private enterprise. The various unions involved appeared to have everything under control. The United Kingdom had an excellent union for their radio operators only as well. When you went through the various lists of countries around the world that might be compared to Canada in some way about as close as one could get to a reasonable comparison was Australia.

Australia is a British Commonwealth country. Their Coastal Stations were spread over a wide expanse and many of them were as isolated as some of ours, and their merchant fleet ranked within a position similar to ours. But, as soon as you tried to compare their marine communications with ours, you realized that they had things well in hand to the point the average Canadian radio operator should have become rather embarrassed, if nothing else. One of the most interesting aspects to us was that they did away with the requirement for a first and second class certificate for their coastal stations in 1976. They down graded the requirements considerably to a certificate known as a Coast Station Certificate. After three years they found this was not practicable and reverted to the first and second class certificates in 1979. The big difference between the Australian system and ours was that they made a point of keeping close tabs on their merchant fleet. The ship owner, government, and many others could care less whether or not a ship carried a radio operator. Ships sailed for centuries, without any form of communication and none were anywhere near as well constructed and safe as the ships of the 1970's. For the safety of a ship and her crew she should have had someone on board capable of operating and maintaining her electronic equipment. The days of a ship groping around in the fog without radar were long gone. There should have been someone on board capable of maintaining that equipment alone. Many ship owners with Canadian radio operators paid a number of bills for an electronic technician to go aboard and repair the equipment in their ship to find nothing more wrong with it than a blown fuse. Why the S.I.U. (Seaman's International Union), the Canadian Merchant Service Guild, and the few other unions involved with our merchant fleet, were not more concerned about this facet was a mystery.

The Canadian Merchant Service Guild did such a fine job for Canadian marine communications that one would think it should be renamed. One of the best choices would have been the Traitor Merchant Service Guild. This Canadian organization went to the United Kingdom in 1981 and complained that there were no Canadian Radio Officers, and wanted to make some arrangement with the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union in order to recruit some British Radio Officers, to operate the stations fitted in Canadian ships. There were Canadian Radio Officers but no one knows why there were any because few Canadian ships bothered to carry one whether or not the law required them to do so. This of course was a fault of this very organization the Canadian Merchant Service Guild.

A Canadian ship should not have been permitted to sail outside of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, on the East Coast, and the coastal waters of British Columbia on the West Coast, without a Canadian Radio Officer on board, if it was 1600 gross tons or larger (SOLAS rules). The Australian government gave permission for a ship registered in their country to sail along their north coast without a Radio Officer in 1979. The Australian Radio Officers did not agree with this decision and took it to court through their union. There had to be a lot in our favour, the worlds radio operators, when the Australian Supreme Court ruled in the operators' favour. In other words, what was the point in having coastal radio stations when your own ships were permitted to run hither and yon without a Radio Officer? We had a number of ships doing just that and for the safety of the ship and crew there should have been a properly trained and licensed operator in each of these ships. One should be able to come up with as many reasons as I can. I could go on forever but would like to make only one further comparison. The Japanese, as we all know, are very good at designing, improving, and constructing in the field of electronics. We had nearly fifty of their fishing vessels off our coast during 1981 – 1982. Each one carried a proper radio operator. Some of these Japanese vessels were as follow listing their call sign, name, and gross tonnage. Note the size.

JMCJ	OTORI MARU NO.38	404
JERF	YUKO MARU NO.18	344
JNZR	MATSUEI MARU NO.11	344
JMTE	FUKU MARU NO.38	404
JJUN	SEISHO MARU NO.33	299
JCYU	DAITO MARU NO.2	284
JRVS	MATSUEI MARU NO.8	299
JGOI	KOSHEN MARU NO.8	284
JCDG	KAISEI MARU NO.18	284



Kyokuyo Company Limited, Tokyo, Japan

This is the MV SATSUKI MARU built by Hashihama Shipbuilding in 1973. She had international call sign JGWF and was a refrigerated cargo vessel built for transporting fruit and fish. She called station VCS on occasion while taking on a cargo of frozen fish from the Japanese vessels fishing in this area.



Japan Radio Company, Tokyo, Japan

This is the Radio Station in SATSUKI MARU call sign JGWF.

The Equipment:

JRC's JSS-15 (1.2 KW SSB radio console) including NRD-10 and NRD-15R Receivers

JRC's JHV-202 International Harbor Radiotelephone
JRC's JAX-21 Facsimile Receiver
JRC's JSB-25 27MHZ SSB
Koden's KS-530 Direction Finder

Realizing this simple fact I took a look at all the fishing vessels and tried to compare them with our fleet. I had seen a number of photographs of European fishing vessels and I came up with a number of questions. The British fleet carried so many operators that their radio operators' union was divided into a section for them alone. Why did these vessels carry a radio operator? Did they travel farther from home than our vessels? I think not. Iceland is no farther from Scotland than Halifax is from the Grand Banks. It appeared to be based on a time factor, the time spent at sea. Their vessels were no larger than the Canadian fishing vessels and the following are a few examples, listing their call sign, name and gross tonnage.

GDSU	WILLIAM WILBERFORCE	698
GPKA	BOSTON CONCORD	758
GOWC	GAVINA	532
GPHY	IRVANA	533
GOWU	BOSTON BEVERLY	517
GOZJ	LUNEDA	532
GQHH	JACINTA	599
GYBE	BOSTON LINCOLN	994
GPHH	FARNELLA	1207
GRLH	BOSTON EXPLORER	425
GRPH	BOSTON KESTREL	431
MWTR	BLACK WATCH	697
GIAF	ST. GERONTIUS	659
GOMV	INVINCIBLE	1085
MZUR	SOUTHELLA	1144
GTHL	PRINCESS ANNE	1476
GSDE	SIR FRED PARKES	1033
GOYB	BOSTON BLENHEIM	517



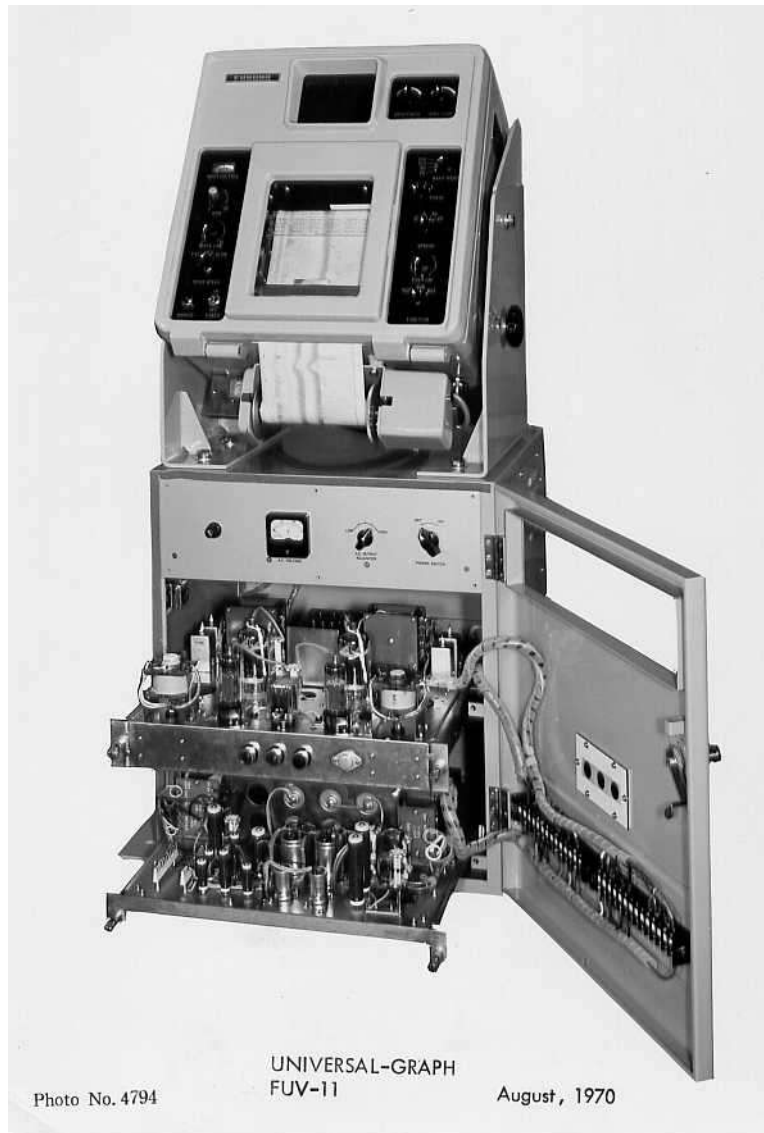
Geoffrey Pass F.I.L.P., Grimsby, via British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is Skipper Alan Redpath operating the Furuno Universal-Graph aboard FV ROSS JAGUAR.

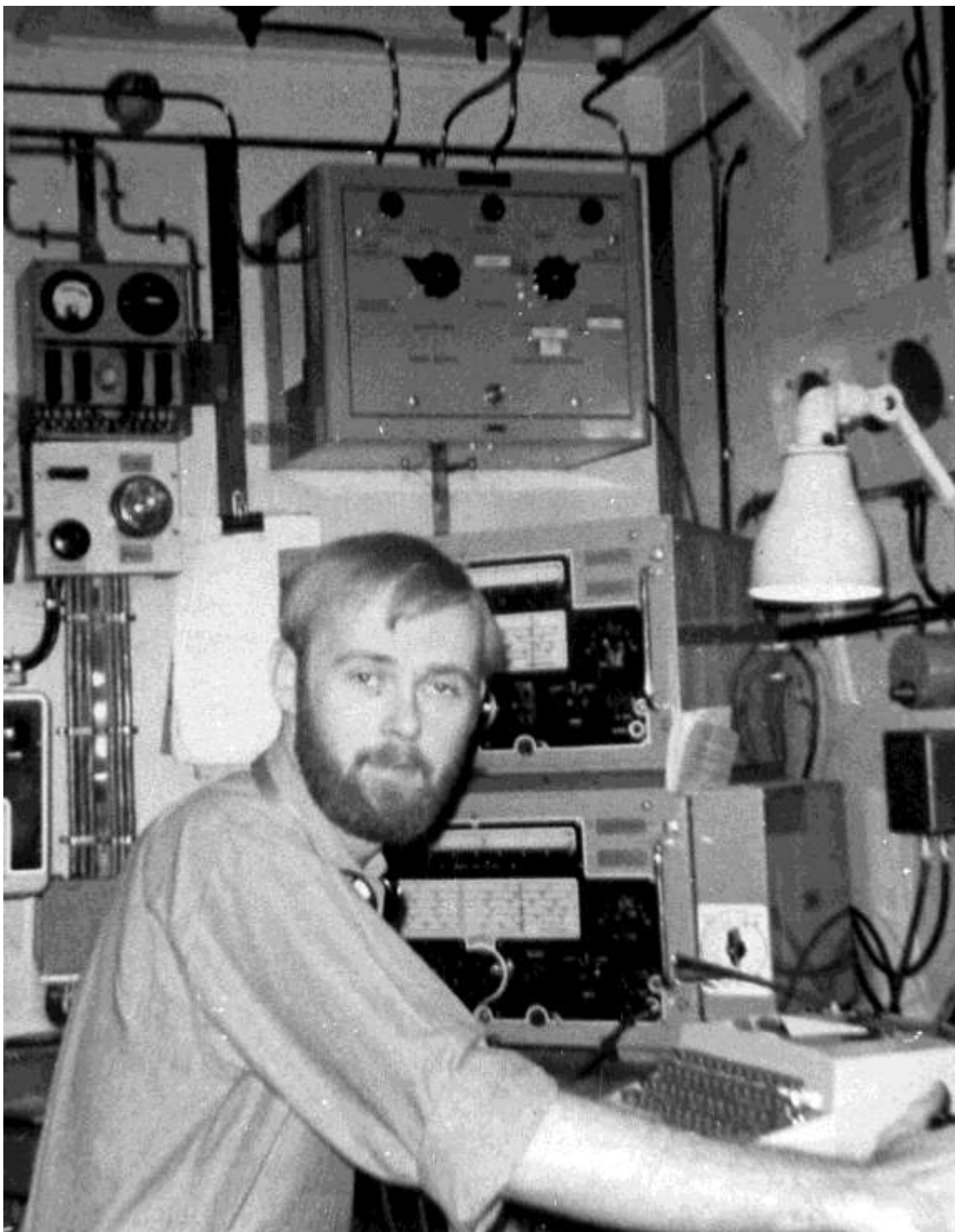


Geoffrey Pass F.I.L.P., Grimsby, via British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is another view of Skipper Alan Redpath operating the Furuno Universal-Graph aboard FV ROSS JAGUAR.



Geoffrey Pass F.I.L.P., Grimsby, via British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union
A Furuno Universal-Graph that was used as both a Fishfinder and Fathometer



John Matterface

This is Radio Officer John Matterface on duty in the Radio Room of the British FV WILLIAM WILBERFORCE with international call sign GDSU in May 1968



Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union
FV BOSTON BLENHEIM



Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

FV PRINCESS ANNE

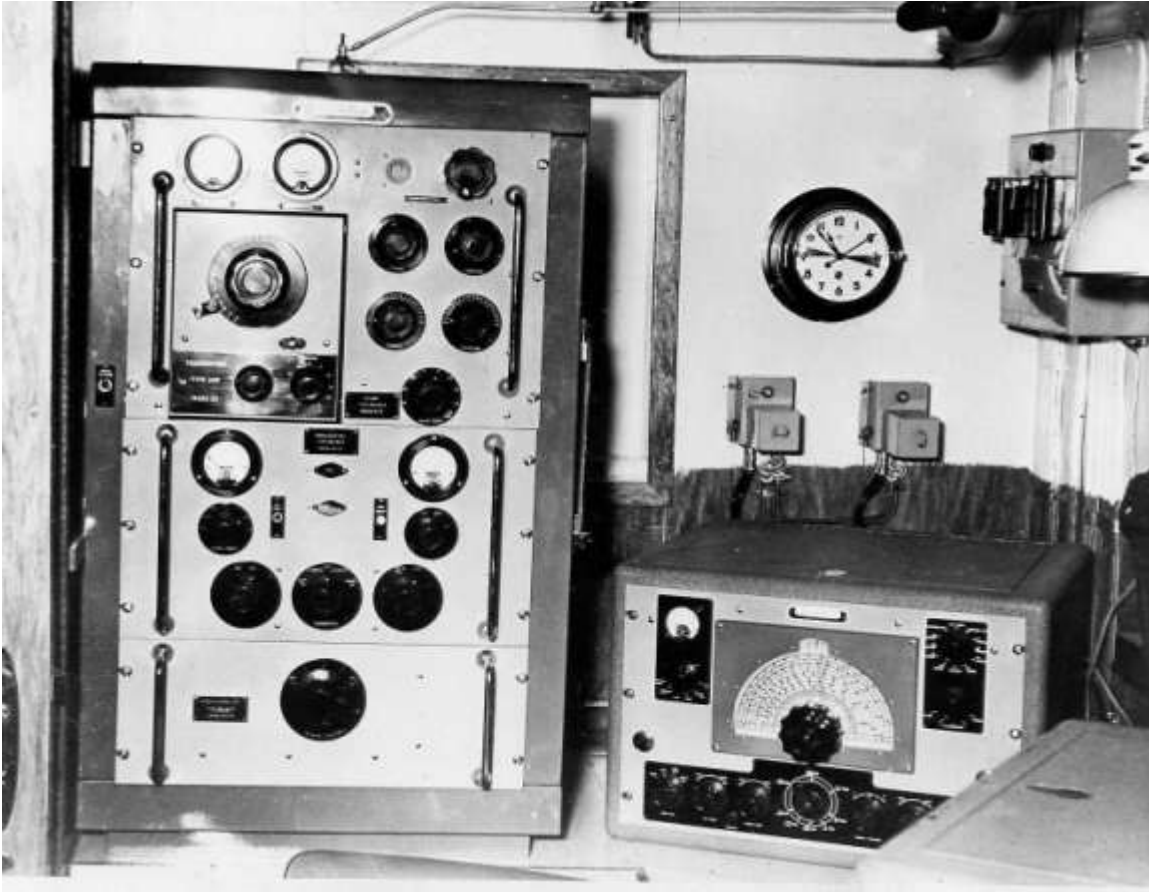


Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

FV SIR FRED PARKES



Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union
FV BOSTON BEVERLEY



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is one of the Transmitters and Receivers in the British FV BLACK WATCH with call sign MWTR.



World Ship Society

FV BLACK WATCH



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

The Redifon GR377 SSB 2-mHz Radiotelephone



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union
The Redifon G341 Transmitter



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

The Redifon R408 Receiver



Donald I. Innes, Hesse, via the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is a portion of the Radio Room of the British FV SOUTHELLA with call sign MZUR taken in 1969. The equipment from left to right: Redifon Radiotelephone Transceiver, Redifon Broadcast Receiver and Recorder that could be played throughout the vessel for the crew's entertainment, Loran Receiver, and a Kodon Automatic Radio Direction Finder.



Donald I. Innes, Hesse, via the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is part of the Bridge of the British FV SOUTHELLA showing the Chart Table, Lighting Panel (Switches), Intercom Telephones, etc.



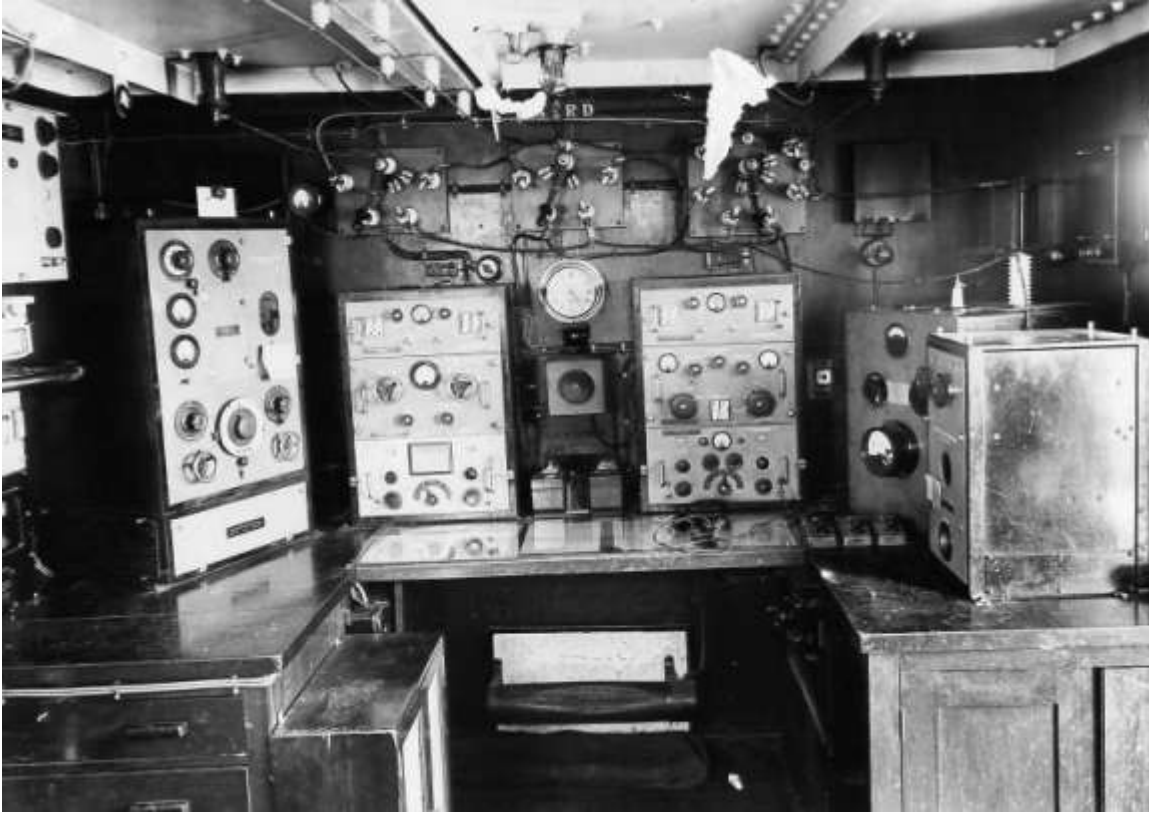
Walter Fussey and Son, Hessle, via the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is a small portion of the Electronics fitted in the British FV INVINCIBLE with call sign GOMV. The two-tone panel is a Redifon Entertainment panel that was used for listening to Broadcast Radio Stations, Records, Tape Recorder, etc., or as a general intercom throughout the vessel.



Donald I. Innes, Hessle, via the British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is routine maintenance taking place in the Radio Room of the British FV ST. GERONTIUS with call sign GIAF. This was a Redifon Station.



The British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is a typical Radio Room fitted in a British Fishing Vessel of the 1950's. This one could have been the FV EMBERCON if there was such a vessel, but that is as close as I can come to locating the identity of the station. Can you either identify the equipment or the vessel? Sorry about the poor quality of the photograph.



John Matterface

The British FV BOSTON CONCORDE with call sign GPKA

British fishing vessels of 400 gross tons or larger carried certificated operators. The following two did not carry an operator and this is the reason I have based my assumption on a time factor rather than the distance factor.

GUUL	BOSTON HALIFAX	387
GUSU	BOSTON STIRLING	387

These are random examples that I chose for no particular reason. I have seen photographs of the radio rooms in a few of the above. I must admit that I saw radio rooms in merchant ships that were fitted with much less equipment than these. Actually from all the electronics that was fitted in these fishing vessels, a warship would be the only other type of ship that I can think of that might carry more electronic equipment because the wheelhouse in these fishing vessels were literally louzy with every gadget one could imagine. Each Canadian fishing vessel had just as much electronic equipment as any other fishing vessel within the worlds fishing fleet. They did not carry an operator and therefore did not have the maintenance and communication capabilities of the others. From correspondence with Mr. Harold Connor, Chairman, National Sea Products Limited, one of the largest fishing concerns in Canada, January 1976, he states: "At the moment we have about fifty fishing vessels, some thirty-three of these are side or stern trawlers, and the balance of them are scallopers, herring fishing vessels, and so forth."

The following is a list of the Canadian fishing vessels of 400 gross tons or larger from the 1979 List of Canadian Fishing Vessels. Those with CANADA or CAPE as the prefix of the name belong to National Sea Products. If nothing else this adds further proof that our Department of Communications had no actual ruling on who got a four letter call sign or who got one of those other things some call a call sign. Many vessels smaller than these, registered in Canada, had a four letter call sign. These fishing vessels are listed in the manner I listed the British and Japanese fishing vessels, call sign, name, and gross tonnage.

CG2683	ALFRED NEEDLER	1200
VC8335	A. W. HENRIKSEN	789
VC7185	ARCTIC HARVESTER	696
CGGB	ARCTICA	702
VGWS	ARLENE E. MELLON	651
VGGN	ATLANTIC BEATRICE	624
VC8910	ATLANTIC CAROL	624
VC8218	ATLANTIC CLAIRE	661
VC8732	ATLANTIC DOROTHY	661
VC8544	ATLANTIC ELIZABETH	661
VGKV	ATLANTIC ELLEN	624
CYPG	ATLANTIC GAIRDNER	1444
VGVQ	ATLANTIC HAWKE	1445
VGGL	ATLANTIC JAG	1441
VOZQ	ATLANTIC JANE	624
VC4959	ATLANTIC LINDSEY	661
VC8952	ATLANTIC MARGARET	624
VOGQ	ATLANTIC MARIE	624
VDYS	ATLANTIC NORMA	624
VGfV	ATLANTIC OCEAN MAID	1440
VC8940	ATLANTIC OLGA	661
VGGV	ATLANTIC PATON	1441
VGKP	ATLANTIC PEGGY	625
VGGY	ATLANTIC RUTHANN	624
VXMZ	ATLANTIC TONI	624
VC8346	BARBARA N	796
VGKT	BEDEQUE	511
VC6721	CANADA CLUB	477
VC6720	CANADA PARK	477
VC6155	CANSO CONDOR	684
VC6157	CANSO DART	684
----	CANSO LIGHT	661
VC6158	CANSO MARINER	685 Sank April 1 st , 1982
VYNS	CAPE ALERT	618
VXLS	CAPE ARGUS	628
VGJZ	CAPE BAULD	629
VCXB	CAPE BALLARD	984
VCSV	CAPE BEAVER	984
VCTF	CAPE BRIER	984
VXKW	CAPE CHARLES	628
VCSX	CAPE FAME	984
VC8596	CAPE FAREWELL	748
VY3823	CAPE FOURCHU	984
VC8057	CAPE FOX	750
VGJW	CAPE HOWE	628
VC9122	CAPE HUNTER	748
VC6178	CAPE JOHN	629
VC8927	CAPE LA HAVE	750
VCSW	CAPE LANCE	984
VC5640	CAPE MORROW	617
VC8065	CAPE NEDDICK	749
CYBP	CAPE NELSON	618
VC5639	CAPE NOVA	617
VYZM	CAPE PICTOU	616
VC9606	CAPE SAMBRO	750
VC5713	CAPE SCOTIA	618

VC8067	CAPE SMOKY	750
VC8594	CAPE VERDE	750
VC8942	CAPE WRATH 2	750
VGMG	CAPE YORK	628
VGRD	DOLORES T. JANDA	683 Sank February 1982
VC6467	EGMONT	511
VC8350	ESTHER BOYD	792
VC8558	FORTUNE ENDEAVOUR	480
----	FUMI	476
VC8423	G. C. BASSIN	446
VC7381	G. C. CAP AUX MEULES	441
VC8424	G. C. FATIMA	446
VC8438	G. C. GRANDE ENTRÉE	438
VC7380	G. C. HAVRE AUBERT	440
VC9450	GADUS ATLANTICA	2351
VCJG	GADUS PETREL	878
VGFK	GRAND BARON	539
VGGX	GRAND COUNT	540
VGVP	GRAND KNIGHT	539
VOPQ	GRAND PRINCE	535
VC6136	GULF GEORGETOWN	518
VXSG	GULF GERD	520
VC5453	GULF GRENADIER	513
VGQM	GULF GUNN	504
VC6156	H. M. KAISER	683
VC6137	HILLSBOROUGH	510
VGVI	J. B. NICKERSON	652
VC8922	KLOSTER	544
VC9616	LADY HAMMOND	897
VC7000	LADY JANICE	434
VC8257	LADY JOHNSON 2	591
----	LADY MARIA	433
VCQG	LUMAAQ	433
VODP	MAI	982
VY2577	MERSEY VIKING	600
VA6784	NADINE	493
VOQP	NATHAN CUMMINGS	684
VOLQ	NEWFOUNDLAND EAGLE	835
VGGZ	NEWFOUNDLAND FALCON	836
VCLL	NEWFOUNDLAND HAWK	835
VGFT	NEWFOUNDLAND KESTREL	835
----	NORANDO	453
VC9071	OLD ROCK	2379
VC8509	PENNYHOPE	748
VA7126	RALI 2	489
VGVM	SANDRA L. GAGE	514
CZ3155	SOUTHWARD HO	421
VGWL	THORFINN	599
VC8334	UNIMARFISH	472
VC8345	W. R. RITCEY	791
CYMP	WESTWHALE 8	581
----	WILFRED TEMPLEMAN	1200
VGMI	ZAGREB	652
VC8928	ZAMBESI	650
VC8750	ZAMBIA	650
VC8730	ZAMORA	650

VC8943	ZARAGOZA	846
VGPN	ZEBULON	650
VOQF	ZEELAND	667
VC8560	ZEILA	672
VC8245	ZENICA	672
VC8990	ZERMATT	652
VC8991	ZEVEN	650
VC8504	ZIDANI	672
VGGK	ZINDER	652
VC5988	ZOGI	672
VOQL	ZONNEMAIRE	667
VGPR	ZORY	651
VOWW	ZURICH	667
VGGJ	ZWEELOO	649



John Rae

This is a close-up of some of the electronics fitted on the Bridge of the FV CAPE CHARLES



John Rae

This is the Fishing Master's Command Position on the Bridge of the FV CAPE CHARLES



John Rae

This is the Canadian FV CAPE CHARLES alongside at Halifax 1980. This vessel received severe damage from a storm on January 16th, 1982, and had to be escorted into St. John's, Newfoundland, with her wheelhouse windows smashed out. The buoy vessel CCGS BARTLETT with call sign CGDR escorted her into St. John's.

I was unable to locate the call sign of some of these vessels, which is further proof that all our ships should have been properly entered in the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations. It is a good indication that these vessels without a call sign have never had a proper licence for their radio stations. From the difficulty I had in locating some of these call signs, a number of these radio station licences needed renewing. There were nearly fifteen thousand smaller fishing vessels in Canada. One can imagine the nightmare in trying to locate the call signs of all that are fitted with radio stations. We often had a telephone call or a message at the VCS station for one of these vessels, but very rare was communications established. Actually, seldom was any contact made with these or any of the other Canadian fishing vessels because they communicated on their own company frequencies, and they used to complain of that to us as though we had a magic wand to wave in order to contact the vessel they wanted.

It is interesting to note that those listed with CANSO as the prefix of the name are some of those built for Acadia Fisheries Limited. For example: ACADIA TERN became CANSO MARINER when this vessel was turned over to Marine Trawlers Limited. Acadia Fisheries was a branch of the large British fishing interests, Boston Deep Sea Trawlers. They copied the design, equipment, fishing ability, whatever the terminology, of these Acadia vessels into their vessels BOSTON BLENHEIM and BOSTON BEVERLY. Needless to say they were not impressed with the Canadian navigation or communication features and did not copy that detail. There was no known law that stipulated these foreign fishing vessels must carry a Radio Officer. It was a simple case where these foreign owners wanted good communication and maintenance for their vessels.

The fishing community of Australia purchased a fleet of these large fishing vessels. Apparently the fishing in that area would not support this fleet and I heard that it folded with the loss of seventeen million Australian dollars. The Australian Radio Officers would have made a point of making the radio rooms in this fleet efficient maintenance and communication centers. We in Canada had the fish that could support this fishing fleet and the fleets from many countries. It is a shame the Canadian Radio Officer was not a part of this fleet.

There were some Canadian fishing vessels that disappeared over the years. One cannot help but wonder if there had been a Radio Officer in these vessels if they could have alerted someone on 500 kHz and saved all on board. These fishing vessels were using 2182 kHz only and VHF FM when it came out during the 1960's. Radiotelegraph on 500 kHz was so much more reliable as a distress frequency that you can hardly find any reason for comparison between it and 2182 kHz. When VAR Saint John had 500 kHz I sent a weather observation to him with no trouble via a twenty-five watt emergency transmitter. At the time I was in Cape Cod Bay and this same twenty-five watts on 2182 kHz radiotelephone would have done well to reach Boston, a very short distance to the west of us.

One voyage of which I learned through this research on the fishing vessel is especially noteworthy. The radar became unserviceable in one of these Canadian fishing vessels and the Captain of the vessel decided to repair it. He had seen the radar technician adjust the components in the case on the wheelhouse bulkhead with a screwdriver. So the Captain found a screwdriver, took the cover off this unit that happened to be the high voltage power supply, and was not long getting the screwdriver across the output of the high voltage. This understandably, burned the end off the screwdriver and threw said Captain to the other side of the wheelhouse, in that order. You have to give this guy credit he wasn't about to give up for getting knocked down the once. He got up and decided to tackle the problem from another angle. In looking around he noticed the thing on the mast, the scanner, wasn't turning around like it normally did. That had to be it. So he called the Mate out and told him to get up the mast and lash himself to the mast, and then spin that thing around so he could see if there was anything on the radar. You can imagine the cursing the Mate was directing towards his Captain while carrying out his orders, but this was not so. This Mate apologized to his Captain stating the reason it failed to operate was because he could not turn the thing fast enough. Luckily the scanner did not decide to operate while the Mate was up there or it would have probably killed him or thrown him off into the water. This of course is but one of many isolated similar incidents. It was amazing these vessels fished so well because with the training they had it is hard to believe they were getting all that was available to them from the electronics they carried. The way they operated their radio communications equipment was a good indication of the way they operated the rest of their equipment.

There was any amount of lack of foresight back then. When I consider this subject I cannot help but remember the incident where we wasted time in making a rendezvous with a small fishing vessel while I was Radio Officer in CCGS TUPPER. We were searching a given area for a vessel that had disappeared and during this search a fishing vessel called us and said that it had just found a small dinghy. We wanted this dinghy to see if it had been carried on the missing vessel.



Kenneth C. Roscoe

This is Radio Officer S. G. "Spud" Roscoe CCGS TUPPER holding son Mitchell at the Charlottetown Yacht Club, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. CCGS TUPPER in the background is at her berth at the Coast Guard Base Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 1974. One can see a bit of the bow of CCGS WOLFE at her home berth in the background. The open door just below the maple leaf on the funnel is the emergency generator room. The two windows just forward of this door are in the radio room. One can just make out the DF antenna at the masthead just above her two radar antennae.

The fishing vessel that called gave his position and when we got there, we found nearly thirty vessels in the area. This fishing vessel claimed he could see us but we had no idea which vessel was in communication with us. Luckily this vessel had no nets down and could maneuver over to us. That was one of my most frustrating experiences at sea. If a good direction finder had been in the radio room, I could have brought us right alongside that vessel steaming full speed. The TUPPER had one of the best direction finders in the chart room of any ship in which I sailed. Her direction finder loop antenna was mounted on top of the main mast and we often calibrated it when passing a radio beacon on the New Brunswick coast. It was very accurate but the damn thing was only good for the navigational radio beacons and the radiotelegraph distress and calling frequency of 500 kHz. It would not tune in the radiotelephone distress and calling frequency of 2182 kHz or the inter-ship communication frequency 2134 kHz that we were communicating with this vessel. This very Captain got mad as hell when I tried to explain to him that any radio transmission was quite capable of being used for direction finding purposes. He claimed that if it was not a radio navigational beacon for marine use, it was of no use. This attitude was the reason a Coast Guard Ship was not fitted with a proper direction finder capable of using the radiotelephone frequencies.

While I was researching the fishing fleets I wanted to find a foreign vessel that would compare with our CCGS ALERT with call sign CGDQ. Our ALERT carried three Radio Officers at this time and one was home on leave each trip. All three had a cabin on the ship, but just two were sailing in her on any patrol. All three were radiotelegraph operators and did no maintenance. Any repairs were carried out at the Dartmouth base or a technician would be flown out to the vessel if required. The only vessel I could locate that could be compared with our ALERT was the British vessel MIRANDA with call sign GULL, believe it or not. MIRANDA was less than half the size of our ALERT. She was just over eight hundred gross registered tons and ALERT was over seventeen hundred gross registered tons.



Rick Falvey VE1HA

This is Radio operator Rick Falvey at the Shift Supervisor/Routing Position, Halifax Marine Radio VCS, Ketch Harbour, Nova Scotia, in 1972. When I wrote this article comparing ALERT with MIRANDA Rick was Radio Officer in ALERT.



Canadian Coast Guard

The Canadian Coast Guard Ship ALERT with call sign CGDQ. We referred to her as the “Dairy Queen” from the DQ in her call sign.

A quick look into MIRANDA’s radio room left one sick with envy. She carried three radio officers and an electronics officer. If her equipment became defective her electronics officer got it going and he could fill in as one of the operators permitting one of the three operators to get some maintenance experience. It was a much more realistic system than ALERT and MIRANDA was fitted with much the same equipment as our ALERT. MIRANDA did much the same job as ALERT and her sick bay carried a medical doctor whereas ALERT carried a registered nurse. MIRANDA often did weather broadcasts for the fishing vessels in her area and it was a real eye opener to make this comparison. I guess as close as one can come to understand this is simply to realize the foreign fishing vessel carried radio operators for some reason and the Canadian vessel did not.

CANADIAN SHIPS

The following were the Canadian ships that were either fitted with radiotelegraph or should have been fitted with radiotelegraph in order to meet the Safety of Life at Sea Conventions if they ventured outside Canadian territorial waters. This is the 1979 List of Canadian Ships and I have also included those ships that were fitted voluntarily and those that were fitted and had their stations removed. Some of these ships were engaged in voyages on the Great Lakes and rarely came as far East as Anticosti Island, Quebec, and some ventured as far as Halifax, Nova Scotia. Others were government ferries running from one port to another within Canada. Several of the others ran hither and yon without a Radio Officer.

I will use the following symbols where known:

F – Fitted with a radiotelegraph station and carried a Radio Officer or is capable of carrying one.

NF – This ship has never been fitted with a radiotelegraph station but is in excess of 1600 gross tons.

FR – The radiotelegraph station was removed by the owner of this ship.

We often received a message at station VCS from a Canadian ship in the high arctic that was relayed by a U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaker because the Canadian ship was up there without a radio officer. I received one from a foreign ship one time as though he were the Canadian ship. He was not using proper procedures but was relaying a message for a Canadian ship he met that was not equipped with a radio officer. This is the reason I wanted to learn this history and to see if I could make some sense out of our trade. When I started this project I felt we were the “funny farm of the nautical neighbourhood” and I found little to change my mind.

Some of the finest and most historic ships in the world made up this fleet and some of the best seamen the world had seen sailed them. For that reason I feel an otherwise boring list of detail will be a bit easier to read if I make a few notes on those that I knew personally. I have two complaints only: (1) each ship should have had a four letter call sign issued randomly and permanently from our international allotments. (2) The ones that traveled some distance should have been fitted and carried a proper radio officer so that they would have had communications and maintenance equal to or better than their foreign sisters.

F VYBL A. C. CROSBIE

Built 1972

Chimo Shipping, St. John's, Newfoundland

Deep Sea Cargo

Marconi Station

Former:

GPUD IDA LUNDRIGAN

IDA LUNDRIGAN was Keith Bennett's last ship. Keith came to the VCS station from her back in 1975 and was promoted shift supervisor in 1980.

NF VDJB A. S. GLOSSBRENNER

Built 1966

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes Cargo

F CGBD A. T. CAMERON

Built 1958

Fisheries Canada

Fisheries Research

Home Port – St. John's, Newfoundland

NF VGWC ABEGWEIT

Built 1947

Canadian National

Icebreaker Car Ferry

Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden, Prince Edward Island

When new she was the largest ice breaking car ferry in the world. She had four propellers, two aft and two foreward and all four worked well in ice. This feature was tried on some other ships but for some reason did not work very well.

F CGCB ACADIA

Built 1913

Bedford Institute

Mentioned in text

Now part of the Maritime Museum, Halifax, Nova Scotia

NF VDRC AGAWA CANYON

Built 1970

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes Cargo

NF VGMD AIME GAUDREAU

Built 1964

Kent Line Limited

Coastal tanker serving eastern Canada and is mentioned in the text under Irving Tankers

F CGDQ ALERT

Built 1969

Coast Guard

Rescue vessel

Marconi Station

Chief Radio Officer Rick Falvey

Radio Officer James Walker

Radio Officer Joseph Morris

NF CGBF ALEXANDER HENRY

Built 1959

Coast Guard

Great Lakes Icebreaker Buoy Tender

NF VCPK ALGOBAY

Built 1978

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes and Gulf of St. Lawrence

NF VGKM ALGOCEN

Built 1968

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VCPX ALGOLAKE

Built 1977

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VCDT ALGOPORT

Built 1979

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes and Gulf of St. Lawrence

NF VYNG ALGORAIL

Built 1968

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

FR VODB ALGOSEA

Built 1970

Algoma Central Railway

Ocean Class

Former:

DIPL BROOKNES

The Algoma Central Railway vessels are listed per the class terminology as used by this company.

ALGOSEA ventured as far as New Orleans without a radio officer on board.

NF VGJD ALGOSOO

Built 1974

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VDFP ALGOWAY

Built 1972

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF ---- ALGOWOOD

Built 1980

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VC7167 ALPHONSE DESJARDINS

Built 1971

La Societe des Traversiers du Quebec

Probably a Quebec Ferry

F VGDD AMBROSE SHEA

Built 1967

Canadian National

Ferry

Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador

Radio station and radio officer unknown

F VCLM ARCTIC

Built 1978

Canada Steamships

Experimental bulk ore carrier that hauled ore out of the Arctic to Europe

Redifon Station

Radio Officer Dermot Cruise



Radio Officer Michel Audet

This is MV ARCTIC loading at Narvik, Norway, February 1979. Michel Audet was her Radio Officer at the time and I believe Dermot Cruise was her last Radio Officer.

NF VXMM ARCTIC TRADER

Built 1958

Shell Canadian Tankers

Small tanker registered at Saint John, New Brunswick

Former:
VXMM TYEE SHELL

F VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

Built 1973

Les Chantiers Davie

Small Tanker

Eastern Canada and Arctic

Became:

VGDK LE CEDRE NO 1 (French for Cedar Tree)

Marconi Globespan Station

Radio Officer on northern voyages only

Jack Campbell and Gerry Graham sailed in her last.

Most of the vessels in this fleet were coastal tankers of similar design. They had radio rooms and Marconi Globespan stations.

NF VA2685 AVONDALE

Built 1908

Marine Salvage

Great Lakes

Former:

ZFDO AVONDALE

WB5639 GEORGE F. RAND

WB5639 DETROIT EDISON

KDVF ADAM E. CORNELIUS

This is one of the many vessels on the Great Lakes that appear to last forever. These old vessels have seen the history of marine communications, flags, spark, continuous wave, radiotelephone, and now the era of satellite communications.

F CGCL BAFFIN

Built 1956

Bedford Institute

World Research

Marconi Station

Radio Officer Phil Rafuse

F VCBD BAIE COMEAU 2

Built 1973

Quebec and Ontario Transport

Deep Sea Cargo

Marconi Commander Station

No radio officer carried

Former:

EEEEY MONTE ALMANZOR

F VGWP BAIE JAMES

Built 1959

Boreal Navigation Inc

Ice reinforced General Cargo

Danish radio station

No radio officer

Former:

VGWP PERCY M. CROSBY

OWQI PERLA DAN

Became:

3FPX MOTHI

The BAIE JAMES was a most interesting vessel. She became the MOTH and was registered in Panama after serving as the BAIE JAMES. She was built in Norway as one of the ice-reinforced freighters designed and built for the Lauritzen Company of Copenhagen, Denmark. Several of these former Danish vessels have been sold to Canadian interests and registered in Canada. The first of these ice reinforced general cargo ships designed and built for this company was the KISTA DAN with call sign OYJR. She was built in Denmark in 1952. She proved that it was economical for a private company to own and operate these expensive vessels. For some years this was the only merchant fleet capable of providing a regular service in and out of the St. Lawrence River during the ice season. This fleet became a familiar sight in both the Arctic and Antarctic Oceans. When KISTA DAN terminated her service with the Lauritzen Company she became the Canadian ship MARTIN KARLSEN with call sign VOLK. During 1979 she again changed flag and name to the British ship BENJAMIN BOWRING with call sign GYOH. In this latter capacity she was providing a support service to the expedition that circled the world via the north and south poles. BENJAMIN BOWRING visited the West Coast of Canada during the early part of 1981. Another of these famous ships that became Canadian was the RITVA DAN with call sign OZBM. She was the Canadian ship KAKAWI with call sign VGDP for a few years. Vincent Ouellet was her radio officer while named the KAKAWI. KAKAWI had a beautiful radio room. So large there were three positions for operating the station. The equipment was laid out on a long shelf above a long operating desk that had the three operating positions. This radio station had the largest transmitter I saw fitted in a merchant ship and was located at one end of this long desk.

NF CYJW BAIE ST PAUL
Built 1963
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes

NF VDYK BAY TRANSPORT
Built 1950
Lothar Loeb
Tanker
Former: COASTAL CARRIER with call sign VDYK

? CZ5893 BEAVER MACKENZIE
Built 1939
Westminster Dredging
West Coast Dredge
Former:
---- W. D. THAMES
---- BATAVUS

NF VGKB BEAVERCLIFFE HALL
Built 1965
Halco
Great Lakes

NF CYKF BLACK BAY
Built 1962
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes

? CYDP BLACK RIVER
Built 1896
Quebec and Ontario Transport
Great Lakes
Former:
---- BLANCHE H

---- SIR ISAAC LOTHIANBELL

F VDND BLUENOSE

Built 1955

Canadian National

Ferry from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to Bar Harbor, Maine

R.C.A. 5U radio station

David Vail and Henry Whitehead were the Radio Officers for many years.



Canadian National Marine Corporation

MV BLUENOSE



Radio Officer David Vail VE1GM

This is the late Henry Whitehead VE1AUM and David Vail VE1GM Radio Officer's MV BLUENOSE. Hank has his arm in the way of the date on the calendar so I am unable to make out the date.

F CZDW BLUETHROAT
 Armed Forces Auxiliary
 Military Station
 Radio Officer Phillip J. Lewis

FR VOSY BONAVIDA
 Built 1956
 Canadian National
 Coastal passenger and freight vessel that sailed around Newfoundland and Labrador and the radio officer
 was a purser that had not used radiotelegraph for years.
 Sister:

VGVV NONIA

FR VYFM BOUNTY

Built 1960

Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Toronto, Ontario

Full rigged ship

First vessel built solely to make a motion picture.

Parts of the R.C.A. 5U radio station when fitted.

In 2005 this vessel was owned by:

HMS Bounty Organization LLC

P.O. Box 141

Oakdale, NY 11769

The vessel was registered at:

GREENPORT NEW YORK

Radio Call Sign:

WCP4944



S. G. Roscoe VE1BC

This is the Amateur Radio QSL card of BOUNTY in 1962. The photograph was taken by Metro Goldwyn Mayer while the vessel was in the South Pacific.

F VYKF CABOT

Built 1965

Canada Steamships

Radio station Marconi Reliance, Oceanspan, Mercury, Electra, etc.

NF VGLZ CAMILLE MARCOUX
Built 1974
La Societe des Traversiers du Quebec
Ferry

F CGCW CAMSELL
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Based on the West Coast
Northern supply and buoy tender
Western Arctic during the summer
Radio station and radio officer unknown
Similar:
CGGN SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

NF VCWJ CANADA MARQUIS
Built 1983
Misener Transportation Limited
21,548 GRT Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Became:
VOTT BIRCHGLEN (owned by Canada Steamship Lines)
See:
VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER

NF VGWM CANADIAN CENTURY
Built 1967
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

F VGLV CANADIAN HIGHLANDER
Built 1967
Upper Lakes Shipping
Bulk Carrier
Norwegian Nera radio station
Radio officer Roy Cassidy
Former:
VGLV CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDER
LMAZ THORS DRAKE



Radio Officer Dermot Cruise

This was the Radio Room in CANADIAN HIGHLANDER with call sign VGLV

NF VDDF CANADIAN HUNTER

Built 1962

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

VDDF PETITE HERMINE

VDDF HAMILTONIAN

NF VCTK CANADIAN LEADER

Built 1967

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

VCTK FEUX FOLLETS

NF CYMD CANADIAN MARINER

Built 1963

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

CYMD GRANDE HERMINE

CYMD NEWBRUNSWICKER

F VGMV CANADIAN NAVIGATOR

Built 1967

Upper Lakes Shipping

General Cargo

Radio station unknown

No radio officer carried

Former:

VGMV ST LAWRENCE NAVIGATOR

GWGU DEMETERTON

NF VOPM CANADIAN OLYMPIC

Built 1976

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VCWZ CANADIAN PIONEER

Built 1981

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VDRV CANADIAN PROGRESS

Built 1968

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

F VGNW CANADIAN PROSPECTOR

Built 1964

Upper Lakes Shipping

General Cargo

Radio station unknown

No radio officer carried

Former:

VGNW ST LAWRENCE PROSPECTOR

---- FEDERAL WEAR

GMMU CARLTON

NF VOTM CANADOC

Built 1961

N. M. Paterson and Sons

Great Lakes

CANADOC was a Great Lakes bulk carrier similar to RED WING and so many other ships designed and operated on the lakes. Several ships in the N. M. Paterson and Sons fleet are small general cargo vessels that on occasion made foreign going voyages. These vessels were fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio officer on these foreign voyages. The suffix "DOC" is used on most ships of this fleet and meant Dominion of Canada.

NF CZ9740 CANMAR BARGE 1

Built 1975

Dome Petroleum

Small Tanker

F VODC CANMAR CARRIER

Built 1963

Dome Petroleum

Drillship

Former:

ICXT TRANSOCEANICA GIOVANNA

F VGXQ CANMAR EXPLORER

Built 1945

Dome Petroleum

Drillship

Former:

---- MARY J

ANWH SNAKEHEAD (American)

F VOCD CANMAR EXPLORER 2

Built 1945

Dome Petroleum

Drillship

Former:

---- KATHLEEN M

AOBB MOORING HITCH (American)



Radio Officer Joe Burgoyne

This is the drillship CANMAR EXPLORER II with call sign VOCD



Radio Officer Joe Burgoyne



Radio Officer Joe Burgoyne

This is the radio room in CANMAR EXPLORER II with call sign VOCD

F VGXS CANMAR EXPLORER 3
 Built 1973
 Dome Petroleum
 Drillship
 Former:
 LKBY HAVDRILL

F VCFN CANMAR KIGIORIAK
 Built 1979

Dome Petroleum

Icebreaker supply ship

Most ships owned by Dome Petroleum were based in the Beaufort Sea off the mouth of the Mackenzie River in the Arctic. All had Marconi radio stations. There were several radio officers, Joe Burgoyne and Bob McWilliams were two of them.

? ---- CANORA

Built 1918

V and L logging

West Coast Ferry

F CYNL CAPE BRETON MINER

Built 1964

Upper Lakes Shipping

Bulk Carrier

Marconi Globespan radio station

Former:

5LGT CONVEYOR

CYNL CAPE BRETON MINER

This is believed to be the first vessel fitted with a bulbous bow but I had no way of proving this theory.

This was one of the first vessels given permission by the Canadian government to sail without a radio officer providing it was fitted with satellite communications. It was sailing the Pacific during the summer of 1981 without a radio officer and was sailing in and out of San Diego, California. It would be interesting to learn how they police the communications without the radio officer. One of the more humorous "emergency calls" I handled was from the drunken wife who stated she was "hot to trot" and wanted her old man home. Yet I handled identical calls that involved the loss of several lives. Several of the VHF inter-ship radio channels were nothing but cesspools of foul language and there appeared to be nothing done about it. Over Christmas 1980 one channel of the satellite communications system was out of service for a period of about four days. This was caused from an unknown signal blocking the system. None of the officials was able to locate the source of this signal and had no idea where it originated. If one channel could be terminated this easy it is understandable that all channels could be terminated in the same way.

The overriding emergency feature of the satellite communications must be more efficient than the distress tone generator on 2182 kHz. The overriding emergency feature is one that permits a ship in distress to override routine communications and attract attention. The distress tone generator for 2182 kHz transmitted an alternating tone to attract attention when a vessel was in distress. The best way I can describe it is that it was an electronic reproduction of a donkey braying. At least anyone who is familiar with the sound a donkey makes should find it easier to understand the racket this thing made. The lower tone was in the form of an audible oscillation of about 200 cycles. The upper tone was in the form of an audible oscillation of about 1200 cycles. When these two were flip flopped back and forth from one to the other the 200 cycles becomes the HEE and the 1200 cycles becomes the HAW of the donkey. Because of a defect, probably insufficient voltage operating one of these units, it would sound as though a pail of oats would shut it up. For the most part they flipped and flopped back and forth faster than the average donkey. They made a good racket and the VCS station heard a lot of them. These distress tone generators seemed to fascinate so many one wonders at times if some people had any toys when they were kids. So many seemed to enjoy playing with every gadget they saw. For a three-month period, May, June, and July 1979, British coast stations identified 471 of these transmissions and not one was followed up with a distress message. For a nine-month period, January up to October 1979, forty Japanese coast stations recorded 395. Four were used correctly. Six were located and proved to be someone playing. The other 385 are still unidentified. This is interesting, especially when this radiotelephone distress alarm system was designed for safety of life. There was a big decrease in the number of accidents involving ships when the radio officer first went in ships. There should be some indication of the increase or decrease now that the radio officer has been removed. The TITANIC and the other accidents at that time gave us this radiotelegraph marine communications system we enjoyed for so many years. It is impossible to reproduce the TITANIC accident because it is impossible to get so many of the world's upper class in the same vehicle as there was in the TITANIC. Therefore, it would be impossible to improve the marine communications world if improvement is necessary.

F VCBT CAPE ROGER

Built 1977

Fisheries Canada

Home port St. John's, Newfoundland

Marconi Commander D radio station

The Radio Officer was removed from CAPE ROGER because of budget restrictions. I believe Bob Smith was radio officer for the short time one was carried.

NF VYSZ CAROL LAKE

Built 1960

Carryore Limited

Great Lakes Ore Carrier

NF CA3582 CARRIER PRINCESS

Built 1973

Canadian Pacific

West Coast

FR VCKD CARTIERCLIFFE HALL

Built 1959

Halco

Great Lakes Ore Carrier

Former:

5MDV RUHR ORE

F VCSZ CAVALLO

Built 1979

Federal Navigation

Containership

Newfoundland to Nova Scotia

Marconi radio station

No radio officer carried

Paul du Mesnil was radio officer from the United Kingdom to Nova Scotia

Former:

GXOL CAVALLO

NF VDCW CEMENTKARRIER

Built 1930

Three Rivers Boatman

Quebec

NF CYDG CHARLES DICK

Built 1922

National Sand and Material

Great Lakes

Unable further detail

NF VDCX CHARLES R. HUNTLEY

Built 1926

Dredge

CHARLES R. HUNTLEY was dredging the harbour for the daily ferries at Caribou, Nova Scotia, during August 1981.

NF VYRF CHEMICAL TRANSPORT

Built 1969

Halco
Coastal Tanker

NF VGQB CHESLEY A. CROSBIE
Built 1964
Chimo Shipping
General Cargo

CHESLEY A. CROSBIE held the record for the Canadian merchant ship that went farther north than any other merchant ship and is mentioned elsewhere on these pages. She visited Eureka, Ellesmere Island during 1972. Other notable contenders for this title are THERON call sign VGWW, and IRVING ARCTIC call sign VGLN. Karlsen Shipping claim THERON would not qualify because she was a survey vessel on her voyage and not a merchant ship. Captain Harold L. Maro, Master of THERON for that voyage advised that they did not carry a radio officer. At the time it was the further most penetration of the north for a seismic survey at position 812130 North on August 31st, 1971. THERON was the first vessel to circumnavigate Devon Island and accomplished this during that voyage. IRVING ARCTIC delivered 100,000 barrels of petroleum products to Rae Point, Melville Island in August 1980. She carried a British radio officer on this voyage.

NF VGKK CHI-CHEEMAUN
Built 1974
The Owen Sound Transportation
Great Lakes Ferry

NF VGDR CHICAGO TRIBUNE
Built 1930
Quebec and Ontario Transport
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
---- THOROLD

NF VGKD CHIMO
Built 1967
Canada Steamships
General Cargo

NF VCGQ COMEAUDOC
Built 1960
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VCGQ MURRAY BAY
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF VDTG CONFEDERATION
Built 1961
Northumberland Ferries
Ferry from Caribou, Nova Scotia, to Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

FR VGDC CONGAR
Built 1946
Affiliated Marine Metal and Salvage
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VGDC IMPERIAL HALIFAX

? ---- D. B. WELDON
Built 1896
The Goderich Elevator and Transit
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VCXD ALTADOC

NF CYFF D. C. EVEREST
Built 1952
American Can of Canada
Great Lakes

FR CGMW DARING
Built 1958
Coast Guard
East Coast Rescue Vessel
Former:
CGMW RCMP WOOD
Former radio station:
R. C. A. 5U

F CGBV DAWSON
Built 1967
Bedford Institute
World Research Vessel
Marconi Globespan radio station
Radio Officer George Wilson

F CGDX DES GROSEILLIERS
Built 1982
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Radio station unknown
Radio officer unknown

F CGSM d'IBERVILLE
Built 1952
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Radio Officer Claude Gervais
This was the world's largest icebreaker when new.
Radio station:
R. C. A. 5U
Retired and scrapped in 1982

F VGKG DOAN TRANSPORT
Built 1972
Halco
Tanker
Radio station unknown
Seldom carried a radio officer
Former:
---- JON RAMSOY

F CZJF DUNDALK

Armed Forces Auxiliary
Military Station
Civilian radio officer Bob Calnen

NF VCJL E. B. BARBER
Built 1953
Algoma Central Railway
Great Lakes

FR VOTQ E. J. NEWBERRY
Built 1925
Robert Pierson Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WA4543 THOMAS E MILLSOP
---- BEN MOREELL
WDDL E. J. KULAS
WDDL WILLIAM C. ATWATER running a ½ kilowatt spark station.

NF VCDC EASTERN SHELL
Built 1962
Shell Canadian Tankers
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VCDC W. HAROLD REA

F CYCJ EDOUARD SIMARD
Built 1961
Les Chantiers Davis
Coastal Tanker
Marconi Globespan radio station
Her radio officer removed about 1978
Sister:
VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD
EDOUARD SIMARD had an extension added to her for the purpose of carrying gasoline from Halifax,
Nova Scotia, to ports on the Great Lakes.
Became:
CYCJ LE CHENE NO.1 (French for Oak Tree)

FR CGSW EDWARD CORNWALLIS
Built 1949
Coast Guard
East Coast Buoy Tender
Former radio station: McKay Radio U.S.A. Carried three radio officers when new.

NF CYLX ENGLISH RIVER
Built 1961
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VOKZ ERINDALE
Built 1915
Reoch Transports
Great Lakes
Former:
WBDM W. F. WHITE running a ½ kilowatt spark station.

F CGSZ ERNEST LAPOINTE

Built 1940

Coast Guard

Quebec Region Supply Vessel

Radio station unknown

ERNEST LAPOINTE was the only ship constructed for the Department of Transport during World War II. Her main radio station had medium frequency radiotelegraph only. Mr. Laxson is believed to have served as her last radio officer. He was one of several telegraphists who enjoyed carrying on a conversation, would also roll a cigarette, while copying the weather forecast via radiotelegraph.

F VCPG FEDERAL PIONEER

Built 1971

Federal Navigation

General Cargo

Radio station unknown

Both radio officers were named Smith but they were not relatives and took turns sailing as radio officer.

Former:

SGVN CARL GORTON

F VCPZ FERBEC

Built 1966

Canada Steamships

General Cargo

Japanese station

Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil for the short time she carried one.

Former:

JFFM FUGAKU MARU

FERBEC was the largest ship registered in Canada around 1980.

FR VA2684 FERNDAL

Built 1912

Dale Transports

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

KDUH DOW CHEMICAL

KDUH DIAMOND ALKALI with a ¼ kilowatt spark station.

---- LOUIS R. DAVIDSON

FR VDDM FIRBRANCH

Built 1944

Socodena Ltee Quebec

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VDDM MILLICAN PARK

FIRBRANCH was one of the last Park ships that were constructed during World War II.

F VCLV FORT CHAMBLEY

Built 1961

Canada Steamships

General Cargo

Marconi radio station

Former:

VCLV CHAMBLEY ERA

NF VXXN FORT GASPE

Built 1943
Agence Maritime Inc., Quebec
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VXNX ROBERT MCMICHAEL

NF VDKV FORT HENRY
Built 1955
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VXNW FORT KENT
Built 1943
Agence Maritime Inc., Quebec
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VXNW GUY BARTHOLOMEW

NF CG2048 FORT LANGLEY
Built 1961
Department of Public Works, Ottawa
West Coast Dredge

NF VDZW FORT LENNOX
Built 1944
Agence Maritime Inc., Quebec
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VDZW R. A. MCINNIS
This vessel was turned over to the Seafarers Training Institute at Morrisburg, Ontario, to be used as a training ship.

FR CYMS FORT ST LOUIS
Built 1963
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes East Coast
This vessel was sold to Atlantic Freight Lines, renamed BELLAVENTURE 2 and became an East Coast Container Ship.

NF VDJL FORT WILLIAM
Built 1965
Canada Steamships
General Cargo

FR VC8558 FORTUNE ENDEAVOUR
Built 1973
Fortune Fisheries Limited
Fishing Trawler
Former:
GROS GRAMPIAN MONARCH

NF VGZT FRANK A. SHERMAN
Built 1958
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

? VCYG FRANK BRODERICK

Built 1965

Northern Transportation

West Coast Northern Supply Vessel

? VGTQ FRANK H. BROWN

Built 1965

British Yukon Ocean Services

West Coast Northern Supply Vessel

These two vessels listed above should have been fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio officer. I was unable to find any further detail.

NF VCTM FRANKCLIFFE HALL

Built 1963

Halco

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VDPQ FRANQUELIN

Built 1955

Quebec and Ontario Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VDPQ GRIFFON

F VCQQ FREDERICK CARTER

Built 1967

Canadian National

Ferry from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland

Unable further detail

NF VGNB FRONTENAC

Built 1968

Canada Steamships

General Cargo

FR VDDT FUEL MARKETER

Built 1944

Ship Repairs and Supplies

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VDDT WHITE ROSE

VDDT WHTIE ROSE 2

VDDT JOHN IRWIN

VDDT EGLINTON PARK and kept the VDDT call sign as first assigned in 1944. This vessel was one of the Park ships and one of the few that remained under the Canadian flag.

FR ---- FUMI

Built 1952

J. W. Stephens Iron and Metal Ltd

Whaler

Former:

JATJ FUMI MARU NO.15

FR VC9450 GADUS ATLANTICA

Built 1969

Karlsen Shipping

Factory Trawler

Former:

LJPH GADUS 2

GADUS ATLANTICA did fisheries research, at least that is what I assumed from the large Research Canada sign painted on her superstructure. This vessel was built at Trondheim, Norway, and was to be a sister of GADUS with call sign LMML. I remember reading some time ago that Norway did not consider herself a sea-faring nation. I found this rather odd at the time but believe there is some truth to the statement. About the time GADUS 2 was built Norway was trying to convince the various international telecommunication conferences that radiotelephone frequency 2182 kHz was a more reliable distress frequency than radiotelegraph frequency 500 kHz. On learning this I felt Norway was saturated in "tanglefoot" or whatever is the national alcoholic beverage of the country. The various delegates at these conferences must have more or less felt the same. They politely heard all Norway had to put forward on the subject. Then politely ignored them with the attitude that to be convinced they would need more evidence than Norway could produce. These two ships were fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio officer while this was taking place. When GADUS 2 was new her catch was cleaned, soaked, filleted, skinned, packaged, and stored in her freezers all within four hours. For someone who knew so little about the operation of these vessels, I found this interesting because those huge nets made for huge catches. This is the reason the fish soon disappeared and with monsters like those it did not take long.

FR VCJG GADUS PETREL

Built 1973

Comeau Seafoods

Refrigerator Trawler

Former:

LFUD GADUS PETREL

GRUV SEAFRIDGE PETREL

This vessel was one of three built at the A. M. Liaaen Shipyard, Norway. All three were identical and when launched were SEAFRIDGE PETREL call sign GRUV, SEAFRIDGE OSPREY call sign GPOG, and SEAFRIDGE SKOU call sign MVDE. Seafridge Limited was a company with interests in both Norway and the United Kingdom. Newington Trawlers, Hull, England, operated these vessels. All three were fitted with radio rooms and carried radio officers. These vessels could freeze their catch and for that reason could remain at sea for a long period. SEAFRIDGE SKOU was at sea for a total of one hundred days on her maiden voyage. At the time Comeau Seafoods took delivery of this one, the premier of Nova Scotia promised a fleet of these large trawlers for Nova Scotia. SEAFRIDGE SKOU became the Norwegian RAMOEN with call sign LDCE, and SEAFRIDGE OSPREY became the Norwegian SVALBARD with call sign JXYU. Both carried a radio officer under the Norwegian flag. The large American tuna vessels around southern California and the large Canadian fishing vessels were the only large fishing vessels I could find that did not carry a radio officer.

F VCGZ GASPE TRANSPORT

Built 1972

Halco

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VCGZ ARSENE SIMARD

Sister:

VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

FR VXRJ GEORGE M. CARL

Built 1923

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

WA5167 MATHEW ANDREWS

KFKJ FRED G. HARTWELL with a ¼ kilowatt spark station.

NF CZ5771 GEORGES ALEXANDRE LEBEL
Built 1975
Canadian National
Quebec Ferry
Launched:
CZ5771 INCAN ST LAURENT

NF VOGB GEORGIAN BAY
Built 1954
Canadian Shipping and Engineering
Great Lakes Cargo

FR VGMB GODERICH
Built 1906
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
---- PATHFINDER
WPBG SAMUEL MATHER with a $\frac{3}{4}$ kilowatt spark station.

NF VDLJ GOLDEN HIND
Built 1952
Trico Enterprises
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VDLJ IMPERIAL WOODBEND

NF VCVC GOLDEN SABLE
Built 1930
Steel Factors Limited
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VCVC IMPERIAL CORNWALL
---- ACADIALITE

Imperial Oil is the Canadian division of the international Esso or Exxon Oil conglomerate. All the tankers in that fleet had the suffix LITE in their name until 1947 when these ships were renamed with an IMPERIAL prefix. ACADIALITE was not fitted with radio. IMPERIAL CORNWALL had radiotelephone only.

NF CYCT GORDON C. LEITCH
Built 1952
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Sister:
VDLC JAMES MORRIS

NF CGDS GRIFFON
Built 1970
Coast Guard
Great Lakes Buoy Tender

? VGKY GROVEDALE
Built 1905
The Steel Company of Canada
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:

KDXU DONALD B. GILLIES

Unable further detail

F CYCM GULF CANADA

Built 1952

Gulf Oil Limited

Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Former radio officers: Bob McWilliams and Cyril R. "Sprack" Spracklin

Former:

CYCM B A PEERLESS

Became:

CYCM COASTAL CANADA

NF VOPL GULF GATINEAU

Built 1976

Gulf Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

NF VOXG GULF MACKENZIE

Built 1976

Gulf Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

F VCJQ H1060

Built 1964

Kent Line Limited

Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: British unknown

Former:

ZCEK H1060

VGWT M. J. BOYLEN

F VCKW H1070

Built 1966

Kent Line Limited

Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: British unknown

Former:

ZCEJ H1070

VXZR H1070

? VGKR H. C. HEINBECKER

Built 1905

Robert S. Pierson

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGKR WESTDALE

WGVA GEORGE W. PERKINS

NF VGFJ H. M. GRIFFITH

Built 1973

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VXLG HAIDA BRAVE
Built 1978
Kingcome Navigation
West Coast Cargo Vessel

FR VCQS HAIDA CHIEFTAN
Built 1944
Kingcome Navigation
Tug
Former:
VCQS N. R. LANG
VCQS ESCORT
VCQS FOUNDATION LILLIAN

NF CZ5562 HAIDA MONARCH
Built 1974
Kingcome Navigation
West Coast Cargo Vessel

NF VXYK HAIDA TRANSPORTER
Built 1968
Kingcome Navigation
West Coast Ferry

NF VYMZ HALLFAX
Built 1962
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo
Became:
H9YV COALER 1

? VGTG HERON B
Built 1906
Trico Enterprises
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WEVG J PIERPONT MORGAN

FR VGGR HILDA MARJANNE
Built 1943
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Former:
SWEH KATE N L
KVMJ GRANDE RONDE

NF VDLX HOCHELAGA
Built 1949
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VGCY HOLIDAY ISLAND
Built 1971
Canadian National
Ferry from Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden, Prince Edward Island
Launched:

VGCY WILLIAM POPE

Sister:

VGCZ VACATIONLAND

I was never certain these were a ship or a floating parking garage for automobiles. They looked like large boxes but did the job during the summer.

F CGDG HUDSON

Built 1963

Bedford Institute

World Research Vessel

Marconi radio station

Radio Officer: Neville Best

CSS HUDSON was the only vessel that has circumnavigated both the North and South American continents.

NF VCFY HUDSON TRANSPORT

Built 1962

Halco

Great Lakes Tanker

The Hall Corporation Shipping Limited changed its name to Halco Limited. Halco had been this organization's registered telegraph address. Halco owned a fleet of bulk carriers and tankers. The bulk carriers were named with CLIFFE HALL as the suffix of each name and the tankers had the suffix TRANSPORT in each name. Most ships in the fleet were registered in Canada. One that comes to mind that was not registered in Canada was COASTAL TRANSPORT. She was registered in Liberia with call sign D5XD. Bill Ellis from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, was her radio officer. The ships registered in Canada can be found in this list and none carried a radio officer.

On Christmas day, 1981, fire broke out in the crew's accommodation causing severe damage to the HUDSON TRANSPORT off Matane, Quebec, on the St. Lawrence River. She was on a voyage from Trois-Rivieres to the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, with a full cargo of bunker C fuel oil and diesel oil. Seven lives were lost in this incident. One was the brother of a crewmember lost when a sister ship CARTIERCLIFFE HALL experienced a similar fire on June 4th, 1979. One of the officers rescued from HUDSON TRANSPORT had been in CARTIERCLIFFE HALL at the time of the fire in her. Six lives were lost in the CARTIERCLIFFE HALL fire off Copper Harbour, Lake Superior, during a voyage from Duluth, Minnesota, to Port Cartier, Quebec.

The fire in HUDSON TRANSPORT prompted the news media to use some very colourful terminology in describing various union official's and the crewmember's descriptions of two items in particular. The two items were the delay in the time that it took the coast guard to get rescue equipment on the scene. The other was a complaint directed towards two foreign vessels that took the time to stop near HUDSON TRANSPORT but did nothing to assist in the removal of her crew. It is rather obvious that the fault for both complaints was a lack of communication. Had HUDSON TRANSPORT carried a radio officer he could have activated his auto alarm on 500 kHz and made it clear to these two foreign ships in the international language of radiotelegraph that she was in distress and needed assistance. This should have eliminated any confusion. There were still many steam ships sailing at this time that carried out a procedure the engineers called "blew the tubes" daily. This was a process of cleaning the tubes of the engine and the smoke it produced made a ship appear as though she were on fire. Had the HUDSON TRANSPORT carried a radio officer he could have used his lifeboat radio to communicate with these two ships via radiotelegraph as soon as he had evacuated the radio room. The accommodation had to be evacuated shortly after the fire was discovered. HUDSON TRANSPORT had the one superstructure aft only.

There were many statements made at the time of the accident to the effect that many changes would be made to improve the safety of all the Canadian ships.

F VCRT HUDSON VENTURE

Built 1964

Jourdain Navigation Limited
General Cargo
Radio station unknown
No radio officer

Former:

SFBX SILVA

SFBX GONDUL

Became:

---- KANGUK (Hudson Bay Company but I was unable to locate any further detail)

HUDSON VENTURE violated the international laws as laid down by the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) conventions regularly. We asked the crew via radiotelephone if she had a radio officer on board while she was leaving Halifax harbour bound for Europe in 1980. We did this in order to assist us in delivering any messages for her. The crew stated they had a radio officer on board and gave us a fictitious name for the radio officer. We of course cancelled several messages addressed to HUDSON VENTURE during this voyage because we made no contact with her. HUDSON VENTURE visited Vera Cruz, Mexico, without a radio officer. There appeared to be no way of stopping her to the point one wondered why Canada wasted the expense for the various agencies that were supposed to police these laws.

NF VCNQ ILE AUX COUDRES

Built 1954

Sceptre Dredging Limited

West Coast Cargo Vessel

Former:

VCNQ HUTCHCLIFFE HALL

FR VDYF ILE DE MONTREAL

Built 1910

Nittolo Metal

Tanker

Former:

VDYF CREEK TRANSPORT

VDYF COASTAL CREEK

---- BASINGCREEK

GBQP EMPIRE TADPOLE

---- WILLOWBRANCH

---- ROSEMONT

---- SASKATOON

NF VGFP IMPERIAL ACADIA

Built 1966

Imperial Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

NF VYQY IMPERIAL BEDFORD

Built 1969

Imperial Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

This is another vessel that made some fairly long voyages without a radio officer.

NF VGYS IMPERIAL QUEBEC

Built 1957

Imperial Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

NF VGFQ IMPERIAL ST CLAIR

Built 1974

Imperial Oil Limited
Coastal Tanker

NF VCVS IMPERIAL SARNIA
Built 1948
Imperial Oil Limited
Coastal Tanker

NF VCDD IMPERIAL SKEENA
Built 1970
Imperial Oil Limited
Coastal Tanker

These small Imperial Oil tankers belonged to the Canadian subsidiary of the Esso or Exxon Oil interests. They normally sailed around the Great Lakes and the East Coast area with the exception of IMPERIAL SKEENA, which was based on the West Coast. None was fitted with a radio room or radiotelegraph. Fortunately for Imperial Oil and the IMPERIAL ST CLAIR in particular what transpires in the heads of certain radio operators will not sink a ship. She made a run to Europe and the radio operators over there were not the least bit impressed with her. IMPERIAL BEDFORD made several runs to South America around the same time. I witnessed one of the most unorthodox pieces of ingenuity I have ever seen involving shipboard communications on one of these tankers. This tanker was using a centre fed dipole antenna complete with balun. I certainly would not want to sail with it, but my natural curiosity left me most interested in exactly how this would perform alongside the old reliable Marconi or L antenna. This is over and above the very narrow bandwidth of this dipole.

NF CZ4348 INCAN SUPERIOR
Built 1974
Incan Ships
Great Lakes Ferry

This vessel was built on the West Coast and is the reason she has the West Coast call sign with the CZ prefix. I predicted that this would change to one with a VA prefix when she renewed her licence. She is not listed in later editions of List of Radio Stations.

NF VXMS INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORT
Built 1969
Halco
Coastal Tanker

FR VDYL INLAND TRANSPORT
Built 1926
Tara Corporation
Great Lakes Tanker
Former:
VDYL TRANSINLAND
KFZW THE INLAND
KFZW STEEL CHEMIST

F VGLN IRVING ARCTIC
Built 1974
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: British unknown

F VDYT IRVING BIRCH
Built 1967

Atlantic Towing
Deep Sea Tug
Marconi Oceanspan radio station
The last radio officer to sail in this vessel was Aime Charest

F VCWX IRVING CANADA
Built 1981
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: British unknown

F VCRJ IRVING ESKIMO
Built 1980
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: Bill Kerwin

F VCRZ IRVING NORDIC
Built 1980
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
A radio officer was carried on northern voyages only

F VCTG IRVING OCEAN
Built 1981
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: British unknown

F CYML IRVING OURS POLAIRE
Built 1963
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
The IRVING OURS POLAIRE (which is French for IRVING POLAR BEAR) was fitted with a Marconi Globespan radio station. It was never used to my knowledge but at least it was there if it was ever required.

The Irving fleet is described at the beginning of Section 10.

NF VXXX ISLAND TRANSPORT
Built 1958
Halco
Great Lakes Tanker
Former:
VXXX ROCKCLIFFE HALL
That call sign would certainly get attention to the point it would probably be a pain in the butt in radiotelegraph. The emergency signal that was right up there next to the distress signal was XXX.

NF VXFR ISLE ROYALE
Built 1947
McNamara Corporation
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:

VXFR OREFAX
VXFR SOUTHCLIFFE HALL

F CGBT J. E. BERNIER
Built 1967
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Marconi radio station
Chief radio officer was French and the second radio officer was English but I was unable to learn their names

NF VXRT J. N. MCWATERS
Built 1961
Misener Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VCGJ J. W. MCGIFFIN
Built 1972
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VDLC JAMES NORRIS
Built 1952
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Sister:
CYCT GORDON C. LEITCH

NF VGGB JAMES TRANSPORT
Built 1967
Halco
Coastal Tanker

NF VCKQ JEAN PARISIEN
Built 1977
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

F VYYY JENSEN STAR
Built 1961
Jensen Shipping Limited
General Cargo Vessel
Radio station unknown
Radio Officer: Michel Audet
Former:
VYYY FRENCH RIVER

Canada Steamships had the FRENCH RIVER built at Collingwood, Ontario, as an addition to their Great Lakes fleet. After 1974 she sailed for about three months only as a reserve vessel in this fleet. Jensen Shipping Limited, Montreal, purchased the FRENCH RIVER in 1981, renamed her, and refitted the vessel for unrestricted international trading. This vessel made her first voyage in salt water as the JENSEN STAR. In August 1981, she made a supply run to various Arctic settlements and returned to Montreal in September. January 1982 saw JENSEN STAR make a run to Algeria and back. During this voyage Michel Audet was her radio officer. He operated from a temporary station screened off on the bridge with a curtain. Jensen Shipping planned to fit JENSEN STAR with a proper radio room and accommodation for a

radio officer but I do not know if this was carried out. This was the only vessel owned by this company at that time.

? ---- JOHN M. MCCULLOUGH
Built 1927
Pierson Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WB2452 SAMUEL MATHER
WPBB WILLIAM MCLAUGHLAN

NF VYGB JOHN A. FRANCE
Built 1960
Misener Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo

F CGBK JOHN A. MACDONALD
Built 1960
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Radio station: Marconi Globespan was the main station for years with the addition of further equipment
Radio Officers: There were many over the years. She carried three when new but most of the time only the one. N. T. Kristensen, Wilf Fontaine, Bill Baxter, Alex Murray, were some of those. Bill Baxter was her last permanent radio officer.
We used to say that the only good ships we had in the Coast Guard fleet were mistakes and this was the biggest mistake of them all. She was a very good icebreaker and well liked by all that sailed in her.
JOHN A. MACDONALD was the first Canadian ship fitted with satellite communications.



Canadian Coast Guard

This is the CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD assisting shipping and one can get a chill just looking at the photograph.



National Film Board 96997

This is First Officer M.C. Lever and Radio Officer the late Art Sledmere in the Radio Room on CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD in 1961. When Mel Lever retired he was quite active with amateur station VE1VX and with the Halifax Amateur Radio Club.



Radio Officer N. T. Kristensen

This is Radio Officer N. T. "Kris" Kristensen in the radio room of CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD in 1979. Kris is sitting at the Satellite Communications Console fitted in JOHN A. MACDONALD.

F CGDJ JOHN CABOT

Built 1964

Coast Guard and Northern Electric

Coast Guard Crew

The world's largest icebreaking cable ship

Home port St. John's, Newfoundland

Marconi Globespan radio station

Became:

VCGM JOHN CABOT

Gerry Power was Chief Radio Officer in her for some time. She carried many radio officers over the years and is mentioned elsewhere with the cable ships.



John Rae

This is the MV JOHN CABOT call sign VCGM off Sambro, Nova Scotia, 1994

NF VDSK JOHN E. F. MISENER

Built 1970

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGLR SCOTT MISENER I have no idea why the call sign was changed!

F VGVS JOHN HAMILTON GRAY

Built 1968

Canadian National

Ferry

This vessel sailed from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland during the summer and New Brunswick to Prince Edward Island during the winter.

Radio station; unknown and was never used to my knowledge.

NF CYBM JOHN O. MCKELLAR

Built 1952

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

F VGZX JOS SIMARD

Built 1964

Les Chantiers Davie

Coastal Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Sister:

VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

Became:

VGZX LA FRENE 1 (French for Ash Tree)

? VA2846 JUDITH M. PIERSON

Built 1917

Pierson Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

WA2137 SILVER BAY

WNXW ALBERT E. HEEKIN

---- WILLIAM A. AMBERG

FR VGSQ K. A. POWELL

Built 1909

Goderich Elevator and Transit

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGSQ ELMDALE

KDWA STANDARD PORTLAND CEMENT

---- CLIFFORD F. MOLL

? VCFZ KINGDOC

Built 1963

N. M. Paterson and Sons

Cargo

Sister:

VOTM CANADOC

? VCGW KLONDIKE

Built 1969

The British Yukon Navigation Company

West Coast Cargo Vessel

Similar:

VCYG FRANK BRODERICK

? VC8922 KLOSTER

Built 1960

Dorman Roberts Limited

Fishing Vessel

Former:

---- BRIGITE FRIESEN

FR VDZF LABRADOC

Built 1966

N. M. Paterson and Sons

General Cargo

LABRADOC's Marconi Globespan radio station was removed and fitted
in SOODOC with call sign VOPG

Similar Sister:

VOTM CANADOC



Graetz Bros., Limited, Montreal for N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited

This is the MV LABRADOR that was a twin sister of MV PRINDOC

F CGGM LABRADOR
Built 1953
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker

Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: she had many over the years, Paul Cooper, Rick Falvey and I believe Rollie Lutwick was the last.

Former:

CGVM HMCS LABRADOR



National Film Board 68-4350

This is Radio Officer the late Paul Cooper on duty in the Radio Room on the heavy icebreaker CCGS LABRADOR in 1968.

FR VGPD LAC STE ANNE

Built 1924

Quebec and Ontario Transportation

Great Lakes

Former:

VGPD BLANCHE HINDMAN

WA4505 MATHEW ANDREWS

KFTY EDWARD J. BERWIND

F VOCP LADY FRANKLIN

Built 1970

Chimo Shipping

General Cargo

Radio station: She was fitted with a Marconi Oceanspan VII when built and a Danish Sailor transceiver that arrived at the Montreal airport just five hours prior to her sailing for the Antarctic. These were her two main transmitters and Paul used the Sailor most of the time. She had a Marconi Atalanta receiver, the Monitor emergency receiver, Autokey automatic distress keyer, Salvor II lifeboat radio, Lifeguard emergency transmitter, Yaesu FRG7000 receiver and an Epsco fax.

Radio Officer: Paul du Mesnil

Former:

GZSC BALTIC VALIANT

LADY FRANKLIN was to be used as a container ship on a run from Montreal to St. John's, Newfoundland. She received a contract to supply the Antarctic French base and Paul made both trips from France to the Antarctic base. These trips were made between 1982 and 1985. Paul had daily contacts with most of the world via radiotelegraph. He had thirty-five passengers and was kept very busy. He had a daily contact with France and a daily contact with the VCS station when at sea. He worked VCS on 8 megahertz around 4 AM which was around 7 PM at his location the opposite side of the world. This should give some indication of the results one could have with radiotelegraph with a good operator and that the VCS station was capable of contacting a ship anywhere around the world.



M.V. "Lady Franklin" G.R.T. 2125
St. John's, Nfld. N.R.T. 1018
Official No. 338951 B.H.P. 4050

Courrier des marins
Seamen's Mail

«LYNACOLOR»

At sea - 4 Feb 1984

Hi Spud,

I thought you might
like a post-card
like this. Note the
stamp. Hang on to
it: you never know
it might be worth
something one day.
73 Paul.

Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises
Terre Adélie

Le «M/V Lady Franklin» opérant
dans l'Archipel de Pointe Géologie.

Photo Robert Guillard

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Spurgeon "Spud" Roscoe
Box 1, Site 5
R.R. #5
Armdale, N.S.
B3L 4J5
CANADA

FR VC9616 LADY HAMMOND
Built 1972
Christensen Enterprises Limited
Stern Trawler – Research Vessel with Bedford Institute
Former:
GQHV HAMMOND INNES

LADY HAMMOND was built as a wet fish stern trawler by the firm of Charles D. Holmes and Company Limited, for the fishing company Newington Trawlers Limited, both at Hull, England. She was built as a slightly larger (897 GRT) sister of Newington Trawlers' fishing vessel C. S. FORESTER with call sign GZMA (768 GRT). Both Hammond Innes and C. S. Forester were noted authors of sea stories. There was some question regarding the decision to build such a vessel when HAMMOND INNES was launched. She lasted five years at her intended job and was then sold to Christensen Enterprises, Halifax. Apparently she was considered to be a bit big to fish with the smaller vessels, and a bit small to fish with the larger vessels for which she was intended to fish. HAMMOND INNES came with not only a radio room, but with an electronics room to compliment the radio room. As LADY HAMMOND she made little use of either. LADY HAMMOND did the same work as ARCTIC EXPLORER with call sign VGFD. They both worked for the Bedford Institute of Oceanography doing research work. ARCTIC EXPLORER sank on July 3rd, 1981, within about fifty miles of radio station VCM St. Anthony, Newfoundland. This ship took twenty minutes to sink, had thirty-two people on board, only eighteen were found after the owners reported her missing twenty-four hours after she sank because no distress call was ever received. She failed to make contact with her company at the scheduled time and that is the only thing that alerted those that something might be wrong. It is hard to believe that something like that could happen with all the communications equipment in use at that time. When the crew left ARCTIC EXPLORER the eighteen who survived departed in two life rafts. One of these began to leak immediately and all eighteen managed to climb into the one good raft. If anyone can find anything that resembles efficiency surrounding this loss, I wish they would point it out to me. There was a lack of or deficiency in the communications of nearly every accident involving Canadian vessels. No one seemed to give a damn.

FR VC8257 LADY JOHNSON 2

Built 1932

Johnson Enterprises Limited

Fishing Vessel

Former:

LAYA POLARBJORN

LCOE JOPETER

LCOE BRATEGG

One wonders what type of chicken would lay a Brat Egg and why Norway changed the call sign.

FR VOBQ LADY M. A. CROSBIE

Built 1966

Chimo Shipping

Cargo Vessel

Former:

---- CORTES

GRWA BALTIC VANGUARD

NF VGJV LAKE MANITOBA

Built 1968

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel

FR VOXZ LAKE NIPIGON

Built 1971

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel

Former:

GORV TEMPLE BAR

The vessels owned by Nipigon Transport are registered at Edmonton, Alberta.

I believe their voyages were restricted to the Great Lakes.

FR VGMX LAKE TRANSPORT

Built 1930

Steel Factors

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VGMX TEXACO WARRIER

VGMX CYCLO WARRIER

The tankers that were owned by what was the Texaco oil interest in Canada had the prefix CYCLO in the name during the years prior to World War II and a few years after.

NF VCTV LAKE WABUSH

Built 1981

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel registered at Edmonton

FR VCKN LAKE WINNIPEG

Built 1943

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel registered at Edmonton

Former:

FPZA NIVOSE

---- TABLE ROCK

NF VCPN LAKESHELL
Built 1969
Shell Canadian Tankers
Tanker

? VCKK LANGDALE QUEEN
Built 1903
West Coast Ferry
Former:
---- KAHLOKE
---- CITY OF SACRAMENTO
---- ASBURY PARK

NF VCQC LAWRENCECLIFFE HALL
Built 1965
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo

? VGDG LAWRENDON
Built 1962
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

FR VXRS LEADALE
Built 1910
Strathearne Terminals
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WB5602 FRED A. MANSKE
KDUB CONSUMERS POWER
KDUB HARRY YATES with a ¼ kilowatt spark station

F VGKL LEON SIMARD
Built 1974
Les Chantiers Davie
Coastal Tanker
Radio station: Marconi Globespan
Sister:
VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD
Became:
VGKL L'ORME 1 (French for Elm Tree)

? ---- LIONEL PARSONS
Built 1908
Goderich Elevator and Transit
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VGQZ AGAWA

FR CYJP LIQUILASSIE
Built 1943
L. B. Tanker
Great Lakes Tanker

Former:
HPLD TEMBLADOR

NF VC7168 LOMER GOUIN
Built 1971
Societe des Traversiers du Quebec
Quebec Ferry

NF VGZJ LORD SELKIRK
Built 1958
Northumberland Ferries
Ferry that ran from Caribou, Nova Scotia, to Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

NF VCJW LOUIS R. DESMARAIS
Built 1977
Canada Steamships
Cargo Vessel

F CGBN LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT
Built 1968
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Radio station: Marconi when new
Radio Officer: she had several over the years. Alex Murray was radio officer for many years. Gordon Stoodley was her last radio officer and the one who went to the North Pole in her.

LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT was the first Canadian vessel to reach the North Pole and she accomplished this in August 1994. This fact is never brought up but it is pointed out that the electronics technician in her disabled the main receivers on Gordie so that he could not use the main station. This electronics technician then made like the big hero and passed a lot of messages via his amateur radio station. Letting electronic technicians serve in the Coast Guard fleet was not only foolish, it was one of the most stupid things the Coast Guard did. Those in charge of Radio College of Canada told us on graduation that we had the basics and it was up to us to go where we could with it. There should have been two radio officers rather than a radio officer and technician, and the radio officers should have had the necessary courses to keep the equipment in these ships in top shape. The way it was, was the way it was and a wonder it worked at all. Canada could not get Canadian Mates and Captains to up grade to the Foreign Going Certificates, so simply extended the Canadian Home Trade Waters way down off South America in order to permit these characters to sail with Home Trade Certificates. Etc.

F VYSM LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY
Built 1965
Canadian National
Ferry: This vessel provided a ferry service from Souris, Prince Edward Island, to the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, for many years.
Radio station: Unknown
This vessel had a radio station but never used it under the Canadian flag
Former:
SDFG STENA DANICA

F VYZJ LUDGER SIMARD
Built 1970
Les Chantiers Davie
Radio station: Marconi Globespan
Sister:
VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

Became:
VYZJ LE SAULE NO 1 (French for Weeping Willow)

NF VGQS MANITOULIN
Built 1966
Canada Steamships Limited
Great Lakes Cargo

? VGGF MANTADOC
Built 1967
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF VGCD MAPLEBRANCH
Built 1958
Les Chantiers Davie
Coastal Tanker
Became:
VGCD L'ERABLE 1 (French for Maple Tree)

NF VCTX MAPLECLIFFE HALL
Built 1966
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo

F VCQK MARINE EVANGELINE
Built 1974
Canadian National
Ferry: This vessel ran between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and Portland, Maine
Redifon radio station
Chief Radio Officer: David Vail
Second Radio Officer: Dan Keating
Former:
C6CA MARINE EVANGELINE
LNZU DUKE OF YORKSHIRE

F VYJN MATHILDE DESGAGNES
Built 1959
Desgagnes Shipping
General Cargo
Radio station unknown
Radio officer unknown
Former:
VYJN ESKIMO

ESKIMO was built at Lauzon, Quebec, for Canada Steamship Lines and made at least two foreign going or deep sea voyages for them. Two trips that I know were to Brazil. One was made in November 1973 and the other in January 1974. At the same time a sister ship the FORT CHAMBLY with call sign VCLV made one voyage in November 1973 to Brazil. Neither vessel carried a radio officer. Apparently permission was granted for these voyages providing they did not travel more than 100 miles from land. Both vessels ignored this stipulation and made a direct run to Brazil and back. This meant that at one point Barbados was the land nearest to them and about 800 miles from them. FORT CHAMBLY was sold and does not appear in this list. Another vessel that was sold and does not appear in this list and made at least one foreign going voyage without a radio officer was the TUNDRALAND with call sign VGDB.

TUNDRALAND went to Chile in November 1979. One wonders if the crew at times knew which flag to fly, call sign to use, or what port of registry to paint on the stern. TUNDRALAND flip-flopped back and forth between Canada and the United Kingdom. During the summer months she was registered in Halifax and used the VGDB call sign. During the winter months she was registered in the United Kingdom and used GUDN as her call sign. TUNDRALAND was renamed ARCTIC TIDE and was registered in the Cayman Islands with call sign ZGQG.

NF VOTR MELDRUM BAY
Built 1950
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VOTR GEORGE HINDMAN
VOTR COVERDALE

NF VCVW MENIER CONSOL
Built 1962
Navigation Consolidated-Bathurst
Cargo Vessel

NF VYTN MENIHEK LAKE
Built 1959
Carryore Limited
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VGXV METIS
Built 1956
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

FR CGBG MIKULA
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Officer Cadet Training Vessel
Based at the Coast Guard College, Sydney, Nova Scotia
Former:
VGA LURCHER LIGHTSHIP NO 4
All Canadian lightships were treated as coast stations and assigned three letter call signs.

? VGDL MONDOC
Built 1962
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

F CGBB MONTCALM
Built 1957
Coast Guard
Medium Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: Charles Clouthier
Similar:
CGCT WOLFE

FR VCLN MONTCLIFFE HALL
Built 1959
Halco
Bulk Carrier
Former:
5MCO EMS ORE

NF VDWC MONTREALAIS
Built 1962
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Twin sister:
CYGR QUEBECOIS

NF VCFW MURRAY BAY
Built 1963
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

F CGSN N. B. MCLEAN
Built 1930
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Radio officers unknown

F CGBP NARWHAL
Built 1963
Coast Guard
Buoy tender – built as an accommodation for stevedores during the northern supply voyages.
Marconi and Collins radio station
Radio Officer: Bill Lenahan was probably the longest serving radio officer.

NARWHAL went to the West Coast around 1981 or 1982. There was a big shift in the Coast Guard vessels at that time. Most of the new vessels went to the Quebec Region at Quebec City and the older vessels were distributed out to the West Coast, Saint John, Dartmouth and Charlottetown.

NF VGQP NEW YORK NEWS
Built 1955
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
VGQP TECUMSEH

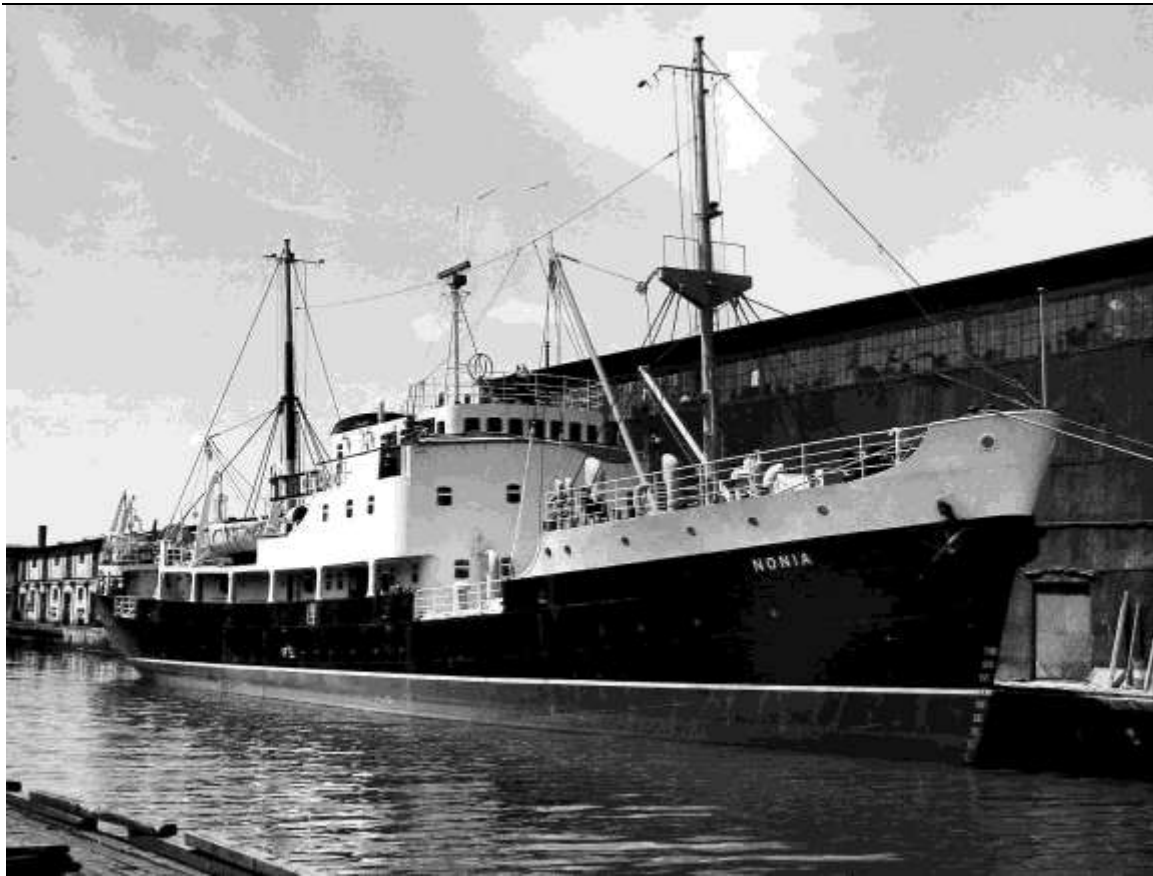
? VDZQ NIPIGON BAY
Built 1951
Canada Steamships
Tanker
Former:
VDZQ IMPERIAL LEDUC

FR VGVV NONIA
Built 1956
Canada Caribbean Navigation Limited
General Cargo
No radio officer or station

Sister:

VOSY BONAVISTA

The NONIA and her twin sister the BONAVISTA with call sign VOSY were built at Aberdeen, Scotland, as passenger and general cargo vessels for Canadian National. Both were 1174 gross tons and entered the Newfoundland and Labrador coastal service in 1956. When the fisheries patrol vessel CAPE FREELS with call sign CGGG sank while patrolling the Grand Banks off the south coast of Newfoundland in 1978, the NONIA was transferred to the Department of Fisheries as a temporary replacement. NONIA was turned over to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation and sold to Canada Caribbean Navigation Limited in 1981. This was the only ship owned by this company and received a contract from the Department of National Defense to supply munitions to the Canadian Armed Forces bases in Europe. When the NONIA arrived at Montreal from a run to Lahr, West Germany, during the last week of October, 1981, she was arrested because the crew was owed at least fifty-six days back wages. The BONAVISTA was still on the Newfoundland and Labrador coastal runs with Canadian National at that time. Many have fond memories of voyages in these vessels, especially the tourists, mainly the American tourists during the summer months. Both vessels were apparently fitted with Marconi medium frequency stations when new. I have no knowledge of one of these ships using radiotelegraph but have been told the Purser had to hold a second class certificate of proficiency in radio.



Canadian National

MV NONIA with international call sign VGVV

? VGJN NORDALE

Built 1929

Dale Transports

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

VGJN STADACONA

? ---- NORANGO

Built 1959

Norango Fishing Limited

West Coast Fishing Vessel

Former:

---- SEA SEARCH

---- AG141

NF VXZZ NORISLE

Built 1946

The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack

Great Lakes Ferry

F CGBZ NORMAN MCLEOD ROGERS

Built 1969

Coast Guard

Home port Quebec City

Medium Icebreaker Gas Turbine Powered

Marconi Station

Radio Officer: Jean-Charles Beaulieu

FR VGBK NORTHERN SHELL

Built 1970

Shell Canadian Tankers

Tanker

Former:

VGBK FROBISHER TRANSPORT

VGBK AXEL HEIBERG

OUKD OLAU SYD

FR VGGP NORTHERN VENTURE

Built 1944

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Twin sister:

VGGR HILDA MARJANNE

Former:

GFJF EDENFIELD

WSUS VERENDRYE

FR VC9071 OLD ROCK

Built 1966

Coastal Fisheries Limited

Stern Trawler

Former:

5NCQ OLD ROCK

JGNP YABASE MARU

Communicating with OLD ROCK with call sign 5NCQ was no problem with her Nigerian Radio Officer. OLD ROCK with call sign VC9071 was a different story. We had communications with her when she called us for some reason only. It was impossible to make contact with her unless she called us. So we simply listed her on our traffic lists and called and called and cancelled when the time elapse expired.

? VGQC ONTADOC

Built 1975
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

F VGXW ONTARIO POWER

Built 1965
Upper Lakes Shipping
Bulk Carrier

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: none was carried during the early 1980's. The U. S. Immigration Officer that cleared our ship while at anchor off Philadelphia one time in the early 1970's said it like it was when he wanted to know why the big difference in our ship and that one anchored behind us, ONTARIO POWER, and I said I did not know except ONTARIO POWER had a union crew. We were in a British ship – a flag of convenience – but both ships had Canadian crews. This Immigration Officer said we came and went with no trouble at all but stated half of ONTARIO POWER's crew would be in jail before morning. I believe it. The Canadian ship did not have a very good name.



Radio Officer George Raine

This is George Raine operating VGXW on board Upper Lakes Shipping's ONTARIO POWER about 1968.
I have also recorded two other photographs when he was a young man operating VCS.

NF VCPT OTTERCLIFFE HALL
Built 1969
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VOWM OUTARDE
Built 1927
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WB2105 ROBERT HOBSON

NF VGLC PATERSON
Built 1954
N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

? CYFY PIC R
Built 1897
Strathearne Terminals Limited
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
CYFY PIC RIVER
---- MERLE H
---- JAMES NASMYTH

F CGSB PIERRE RADISSON
Built 1978
Coast Guard
R Class Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Mckay Radio Station
Radio Officer: Rejean Thibodeau



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

CCGS PIERRE RADISSON

? VGRK PIERSON DAUGHTERS

Built 1923 after portion 1942

Pierson Shipping

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

WA3569 forward portion was CHARLES M. SCHWAB

WYEF after portion was GULFPORT

? VGNP POINTE NOIRE

Built 1926

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

WPBG SAMUEL MATHER

FR VGWW POLAR EXPLORER

Built 1950

Puddister Trading Company

General Cargo Research

Radio station: unknown

No radio officer carried during the 1970's and 1980's

Made several voyages to the Antarctic and Arctic

Former:

VGWW THERON

FR CGBM PORTE DAUPHINE

Built 1951

Coast Guard

Buoy Supply Vessel

Former:

CGYL HMCS PORTE DAUPHINE

Became:

CZGL HMCS PORTE DAUPHINE

This is another of the many little ships one locates that appears to be a fascinating vessel. PORTE DAUPHINE was one of five small ships of fishing trawler design that the Royal Canadian Navy had built in various Canadian shipyards. All five were identical and on completion were given the designation Gate Vessel. They were a multi-purpose vessel used as fleet auxiliaries, anti-submarine net-layers, operating gates in anti-submarine booms, and could be fitted for minesweeping. The other four vessels were:

CYVR HMCS DE LA RAINE

CYVO HMCS PORTE QUEBEC

CYWJ HMCS PORTE ST JEAN

CYWS HMCS PORTE ST LOUIS

All five were fitted with the Marconi CM11 unit as the main radiotelegraph installation. The other four remained members of the Canadian Armed Forces (Navy) and they were used during the summer months as training vessels for the Reserve Navy. One wonders how many radiotelegraph operators received their first sea experience in one of these little ships. It was a fascinating experience for any high school kid during his school holidays. Apparently the Navy built these vessels with the intention of turning them over to the various fishing companies in Canada with the option that the Navy could use them at any time. When the fishing companies saw these first vessels they wanted no part of the scheme. These five little ships lasted nearly fifty years and were replaced when the Navy received their Maritime Coastal Defense Vessels in the 1990's. When the Coast Guard returned PORTE DAUPHINE to the navy she was assigned the CZGL call sign.



National Film Board 1H79-281 LO39825

This is the HMCS PORTE ST JEAN with international call sign CYWJ. The late Joe Burgoyne spent an interesting summer as radio operator in this one up off Labrador while in the navy.

NF VC8060 PRINCE EDWARD

Built 1972

Northumberland Ferries

Ferry: between Caribou, Nova Scotia, and Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

NF VGJP PRINCE GEORGE

Built 1948

Wong Brothers

West Coast Ferry

Believe it or not Lloyds list this Canadian Passenger vessel as having General Radio Service (Citizens Band) call sign XM11 3424. No one would ever print any comment I could make on this.

NF VCJN PRINCE NOVA

Built 1964

Northumberland Ferries

Ferry

Between Caribou, Nova Scotia, and Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

NF VGWG PRINCESS MARGUERITE

Built 1948

Minister of Transport, Victoria, British Columbia

West Coast Ferry

NF VGDT PRINCESS OF ACADIA

Built 1970
Canadian National
Ferry: between Digby, Nova Scotia, and Saint John, New Brunswick
Launched:
VGDT PRINCESS OF NOVA

NF VGGW PRINCESS OF VANCOUVER
Built 1955
Canadian Pacific
West Coast Ferry

FR VGWQ PRINCESS PATRICIA
Built 1949
Canadian Pacific
West Coast Ferry
Radio station unknown

F VDZG PRINDOC
Built 1966
N. M. Paterson and Sons
General Cargo
Marconi Station
Last Radio Officer unknown

F CGDN QUADRA
Built 1967
Coast Guard
West Coast Ocean Station P
Radio station various pieces of equipment radio call sign on station 4YP
Radio Officers: unknown
Sister:
CGBR VANCOVER

NF CYGR QUEBECOIS
Built 1962
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Twin sister:
VDWC MONTREALAIS

? VDQV QUEDOC
Built 1960
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF CZ8100 QUEEN OF ALBERNI
Built 1976
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VDMG QUEEN OF BURNABY
Built 1965
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF CZ8058 QUEEN OF COQUITLAM
Built 1976
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF CZ4990 QUEEN OF COWICHAN
Built 1976
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF CYJC QUEEN OF ESQUIMALT
Built 1963
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VCNX QUEEN OF NANAIMO
Built 1964
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VDQQ QUEEN OF NEW WESTMINSTER
Built 1964
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VG8234 QUEEN OF OAK BAY
Built 1981
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

F VGPZ QUEEN OF PRINCE RUPERT
Built 1966
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry
Radio station and radio officer: unknown
Former:
VGPZ VICTORIA PRINCESS

NF VYKX QUEEN OF SAANICH
Built 1963
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VCNR QUEEN OF SIDNEY
Built 1960
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry
Former:
VCNR SIDNEY

FR CZ2957 QUEEN OF SURREY
Built 1969
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry
Former:

SLGN STENA DANICA

NF VCGK QUEEN OF THE ISLANDS

Built 1963

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

NF VCMC QUEEN OF TSAWWASSEN

Built 1960

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

VCMC TSAWWASSEN

NF CYMW QUEEN OF VANCOUVER

Built 1962

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

CYMW CITY OF VANCOUVER

NF VCVV QUEEN OF VICTORIA

Built 1962

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

VCVV CITY OF VICTORIA

F CZDO QUEST

Armed Forces Auxiliary

Research Vessel

Military radio station

Garnet Hiltz with amateur radio call sign VE1WQ was a long serving radio officer in this vessel. This was the last vessel to carry a radio officer in Canada. Radio officer Paul du Mesnil sailed as radio officer in her for years after radiotelegraph had been removed from the Canadian coastal radio stations. Paul managed to find the last of the world's radio stations using radiotelegraph and would check in with them once in awhile for a radio signal check. Both Paul and Garnet had beautiful radiotelegraph "fists" – they sent very good Morse code and were a pleasure to work.

CFAV QUEST with call sign CZDO is the last Canadian ship to carry a Canadian civilian Radio Officer; Paul du Mesnil.



HARC Files

Radio Officer Garnet Hiltz

NF CYJJ QUETICO

Built 1961

Canada Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

CYJJ WHITEFISH BAY

? VCJR R. G. SANDERSON

Built 1903

Goderich Elevator and Transit

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VCJR MANTADOC

? VDZR R. BRUCE ANGUS

Built 1951

Upper Lakes Shipping

Tanker

Former:

VDZR IMPERIAL REDWATER

NF VCKM RALPH MISENER

Built 1968

Scott Misener Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VYFL RED WING

Built 1960

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VGJC RICHELIEU

Built 1967

Canada Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VDTM ROLAND DESGAGNES

Built 1952

Rail and Water Terminal Quebec

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

VDTM NORTHCLIFFE HALL

VDTM FRANKCLIFFE HALL

NF VGWZ ROYALTON

Built 1924

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Apparently this one was never renamed in sixty years of service.

? ---- RUTH HINDMAN

Built 1910

Western Metals

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

---- NORWAY

NF VGCW SABLE ISLAND

Built 1929

Richelieu Dredging

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGCW BULKARIER

F CGTJ SACKVILLE

Built 1941

Armed Forces Auxiliary

Research Vessel

Military Station

One of her long serving radio officers was Bill Calnen

This vessel is the last of the famous Canadian Corvettes and is now held as a museum at Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was fitted with various military radio stations over the years. The CGTJ call sign has been her call sign since she was first commissioned on December 30, 1941.

NF VGWX SAGUENAY

Built 1964

Voyager Colonial

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VGVM SANDRA L. GAGE

Built 1960

Fortune Fisheries Limited

Fishing Vessel

Former:

PFFJ JULIE STREIFF

NF VCWK SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER

Built 1983

Misener Transportation Limited

Bulk Carrier

Became:

GNBD SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER
C6KP9 SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER
---- VOYAGEUR PIONEER

See:

VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER

NF VXYZ SCOTIA 2
Built 1915
Minister of Transport Ottawa, Ontario
Ferry

NF VGLR SCOTT MISENER
Built 1954
Misener Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VGTD SEASPAN DORIS
Built 1968
Seaspan International
West Coast Cargo Vessel
Former:
VGTD DORIS YORKE

NF CZ6394 SEASPAN FORRESTER
Built 1970
Seaspan International
West Coast Cargo Vessel
Former:
CZ6394 ISLAND FORRESTER

NF VGNK SEASPAN GREG
Built 1964
Seaspan International
West Coast Cargo Vessel
Former:
VGNK GREG YORKE

NF VDDL SEAWAY QUEEN
Built 1959
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

FR VXFP SEAWAY TRADER
Built 1947
Shediac Bulk Shipping Company
Tanker
Former:
VXFP IMPERIAL COLLINGWOOD

? VXYT SECHELT QUEEN
Built 1947
Minister of Transport Victoria, British Columbia
West Coast Ferry
Former:
WA3616 CHINOOK 2
WA3616 CHINOOK

NF VDPZ SECOLA
Built 1951
Secola Shipping
Tanker
Former:
VDPZ CEDARBRANCH

NF VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER
Built 1983
Misener Transportation Limited
Bulk Carrier
Became:

VOSL SPRUCEGLEN (owned by Canada Steamship Lines)

There were three of these bulk carriers built in Scotland. The three were built in 1983 and all three were sisters of 21,548 Gross Tons. The three were:

VCWJ CANADA MARQUIS
VCWK SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER
VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER

The British Radio and Electronics' Officers Union was going to put up a picket around the shipyard that built these three in an attempt to make them comply with International Law and fit them with a proper radio room, radio station and carry a certified radio officer. When the British union realized there was only Paul du Mesnil and I here in Canada trying to do something about this they said to hell with it and gave up. It is amazing that these three relatively small ships were able to find a cargo that permitted them to sail across the Atlantic Ocean. The whole Atlantic Ocean could hear the "nuts" sailing these three. They were passing chapter and verse from the bible like the Canadian Navy did during World War II. The Navy did it via signal lights and few if any could copy the messages. These clowns did it on the international calling and distress frequency of 2182 kilohertz so the whole Atlantic could hear them.

SELKIRK SETTLER was owned by Canada Steamship Lines and named the SPRUCEGLEN in 2007 with call sign VOSL. SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER had a British international call sign, GNBD for awhile and then a Bahamas international call sign C6KP9 for awhile. The last I heard SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER was registered in Hong Kong as VOYAGEUR PIONEER. CANADA MARQUIS belonged to Canada Steamship Lines and was named the BIRCHGLEN in 2007 with call sign VOTT. One wonders why the two still registered in Canada did not retain their original call signs, but both were probably registered outside Canada at one time.

NF VGZC SENATOR OF CANADA
Built 1957
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF VGPY SENNEVILLE
Built 1967
Mohawk Navigation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VOWL SHELTER B
Built 1907
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:

VOWL SHELTER BAY
WDPV JAY C. MORSE

NF VDRX SHIERCLIFFE HALL
Built 1950
Strathmore Terminals
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VGVR SIEUR D'AMOURS
Built 1966
La Societe des Traversiers du Quebec
Ferry

NF CYBJ SILVER ISLE
Built 1963
Mohawk Navigation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? ---- SILVERDALE
Built 1925
Dale Transports
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
ZCVA GLENEAGLES

I was unable to locate any further detail on SILVERDALE. Some of these old lake vessels were registered in Bermuda for a short period for some unknown reason. Did the Great Lakes have flag of convenience at one time or were the vessels purchased from the United States and brought to Canada via Bermuda in order to circumvent some tax law - Your guess is as good as mine.

NF VDDP SIMCOE
Built 1966
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

F CGSJ SIMON FRASER
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Light Icebreaker Buoy Tender
Home port Quebec City
Marconi Globespan radio station
Radio Officer: P. Jobinon during the early 1980's
Sister:
CGCV TUPPER

SIMON FRASER made a circumnavigation of the North American continent with a volunteer crew for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during the summer of 2000. No radio officer was carried during this voyage.

F CGGN SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Icebreaker Buoy Tender
Home port St. John's, Newfoundland
Norwegian EB-400 MF and Collins HF radio station
Radio Officer: Blair Sanderson during the early 1980's. The late Des Daley had been a long serving radio officer in this vessel.
Similar:

CGCW CAMSELL

NF VDMV SIR JAMES DUNN
Built 1952
Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

F CGDT SIR JOHN FRANKLIN
Built 1979
Coast Guard
R Class Icebreaker
Home port St. John's, Newfoundland
Mckay Radio Station
Chief Radio Officer: Malcolm MacNaughton
2nd Radio Officer: Andre Mosasse
Former:
CGDT FRANKLIN

NF VGSS SIR ROBERT BOND
Built 1975
Canadian National
Ferry: mainly from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland but filled in for the PRINCESS OF ACADIA on the
Digby, Nova Scotia, to Saint John, New Brunswick, run.

F CGGF SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Buoy Tender Light Icebreaker
Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Marconi Globespan station
Bill Baxter was one of her last radio officers.
This vessel was replaced in the 1980's by another vessel of the same name but does not carry a radio
officer.



Radio Officer Bill Baxter VE1XU

This is the CCGS SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER at her home berth at the Dartmouth Coast Guard Base.



Radio Officer Bill Baxter VE1XU

This is Radio Officer Bill Baxter on duty in the Radio Room of the CCGS SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER with call sign CGGF.

F VOPG SOODOC

Built 1976

N. M. Paterson and Sons

General Cargo

This vessel was fitted with a Marconi Globespan radio station removed from the LABRADOC with call sign VDZF.

She carried a radio officer for a short time only.

Sister:

VOTM CANADOC



Graetz Bros. Limited, Montreal for N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited

This is the MV SOODOC with call sign VOPG.

F CZFT ST CHARLES

Armed Forces Auxiliary

Deep Sea Tug

Military Station

Civilian Radio Officer

? ---- ST CLAIR

Built 1927

Canadian National

Great Lakes Ferry

FR VOVY ST LAWRENCE

Built 1962

Canada Steamships

Cargo Vessel

Former:

5MPE GAUCHO TAURA

JXQY SKAUSTRAND

FR VCLP STEELCLIFFE HALL

Built 1959

Halco

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

5MAL RHINE ORE

NF VYTD STERNECLIFFE HALL

Built 1947

Halco

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

F VCWL SUN EMERILLON

Built 1969

Boreal Navigation Inc

General Cargo

Radio station: Receiver Eddystone – Transmitter unknown

Radio Officer: unknown

Former:

SKLN BORELAND

Became:

VCWL MESGAGNES

F VCJC SUN HERMINE

Built 1965

Boreal Navigation Inc

General Cargo

Radio station: unknown

Radio officer: unknown

Former:

GPFE INISHOWEN HEAD

GPFE CAST BEAVER

GPFE INISHOWEN HEAD

Became:

VCJC CATALINA

NF VGCK SUNSHINE COAST QUEEN

Built 1951

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

---- PERE NOUVEL

---- JACK DALTON

---- VACATIONLAND

F VYBM SWELLMASTER

Built 1950

Saint John Ship Building and Dry Dock

Deep Sea Dredge

Radio station: unknown

Radio officer: unknown

Former:

VYBM SANDPIPER

NF VCTR T. R. MCLAGAN

Built 1954

Canada Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VDWB TADOUSSAC

Built 1969

Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VOXQ TARANTAU
Built 1964
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VXFN TEGUCIAGALPA
Built 1948
Johnstone Shipping Limited
Tanker
Former:
VXFN IMPERIAL LONDON

F VOTF TERRA NOVA
Built 1962
Puddister Trading Company Limited
General Cargo
Radio Station: Marconi Globespan
No radio officer carried
Former:
VOTF SIR JOHN CROSBIE

FR VGLD TEXACO BRAVE
Built 1977
Texaco Canada Inc.
Jack Campbell was the radio officer on the delivery voyage from her Japan builder's shipyard but no radio officer was carried after that.

NF VGXD TEXACO CHIEF
Built 1969
Texaco Canada Inc.
Coastal Tanker

FR VGPK TEXACO WARRIER
Built 1970
Texaco Canada Inc.
Tanker
Former:
GZNV ANTERIORITY
GZNV THUNTANK 6

FR CGBL THOMAS CARLETON
Built 1960
Coast Guard
Buoy Tender
Radio station when fitted believed to be Marconi Globespan
No radio officer carried after her first few years of service
Home port Saint John, New Brunswick

F VOWN THOROLD
Built 1961
Trico Enterprises
General Cargo
Radio station: unknown

No radio officer carried
Former:
GHXA GOSFORTH

FR VGWL THORFINN
Built 1952
Seaward Holdings Limited
Whale Catcher
Former:
VGWL CHESTER
VGWL THORFINN
LEJC THORFINN

THORFINN was converted into a luxury charter yacht for the West Coast area. She had her original steam engines and provided many memorable moments for those so fortunate to sail in her.

NF VYSD TRAILER PRINCESS
Built 1944
Canadian Pacific
West Coast Ferry
Former:
---- ARL 10

NF CYLY TRANS ST. LAURENT
Built 1963
Dingwall Shipping
Quebec Ferry

NF VXZV TROISDOC
Built 1955
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
VXZV IROQUOIS

F CGCV TUPPER
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Light Icebreaker Buoy Tender
Home port Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
Marconi Globespan radio station
I was radio officer in this vessel from August 1972 until December 1975.
Sister:
CGSJ SIMON FRASER



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil in the Radio Room of CCGS TUPPER. Paul served in her for a short time shortly after I had served in her. The front panels on her two Atalanta receivers are faded from the sun from the large window on the right. One can just see a corner of the Mufax machine on the right.

FR VGFN UNGAVA TRANSPORT

Built 1959

Halco

Tanker

Former:

JXHA TOMMY WIBORG

JXHA VARANGNES

NF VGCZ VACATIONLAND

Built 1971

Canadian National

Ferry: that ran from Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden, Prince Edward Island.

Twin sister:

VGCY HOLIDAY ISLAND

F CGBR VANCOUVER

Built 1965

Coast Guard

West Coast Ocean Station P

Radio Station: various pieces of equipment

Radio Officers: Barry Hastings is the only radio operator that I know who served in these weather ships.

Barry spent many years in several.

Radio Call Sign while on station 4YP

Sister:

CGDN QUADRA

Some of the radio officers serving in QUADRA and VANCOUVER were of the new breed of Canadian coast station operator and did not hold at least the second class certificate of proficiency in radio. I do not know how the Canadian government managed to do this with these operators and the technicians in the coast guard fleet that first went on board in 1962. It was definitely an easy way to keep these people because they had no trade whatsoever when they left this organization. Some company in Texas bought

QUADRA and VANCOUVER in 1982 when they were put up for sale. There was talk of using them as research vessels of some description, but I do not know what became of them.



Barry Hastings VE7BGI

This is the Amateur Radio QSL Card of CCGS VANCOUVER CGBR

NF VCQJ VANDOC

Built 1964

N. M. Paterson and Sons

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Sister:

VOTM CANADOC

Former:

VCQJ SIR DENYS LOWSON

? ---- VM/S HERCULES

Built 1962

St. Lawrence Authority

Floating Crane

Former:

---- S L S HERCULES

NF VGRT V. W. SCULLY

Built 1965

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

VGRT DON DE DIEU

FR CGCJ WALTER E. FOSTER

Built 1954

Coast Guard

Buoy Tender
Home port Saint John, New Brunswick
The radio station removed from this vessel was the RCA 5U
The last radio officer to serve in this vessel was Bill Lenahan

FR CYMP WESTWHALE 8
Built 1953
Ronald Wilson, Vancouver, British Columbia
Fishing Vessel
Former:
---- TOSHI MARU NO 22
LDKH KOS 52
LDKH SUDEROY XVII

F VDJS WHEAT KING
Built 1952
Upper Lakes Shipping
Bulk Carrier
Marconi Radio Station
No radio officer carried
Former:
GPDY LLANDAFF

FR VGPS WIARTON
Built 1907
Steel Company of Canada
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
WGNP THOMAS LYNCH

F VGFQ WM. J. STEWART
Built 1932
Minister Environment Ottawa, Ontario
West Coast Research Vessel
Radio Station: unknown
Radio Officer: unknown

NF VDRL WILLOWBRANCH
Built 1950
Affiliated Marine Metal and Salvage
Tanker

NF ---- WITTRANSPORT 1
Built 1947
West Indies Transport
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
---- LEECLIFFE HALL
---- COVE TRANSPORT
---- WITTRANSPORT

F CGCT WOLFE
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Medium Icebreaker
Home port Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: The late Wilfred Fontaine VY2CT

Note that Wilf had the CT suffix in his amateur call sign to match the suffix of the WOLFE's call sign.

NF CYJT YANKCANUCK

Built 1963

Chemco Equipment

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

FR VC8943 ZARAGOZA

Built 1968

I. M. B. Leasing

Fishing Vessel

Former:

GYBH BOSTON YORK

With all the excellent shipyards in the United Kingdom one can only wonder why British companies have their vessels built in foreign yards and the ZARAGOZA was one of these mysteries. Politics, money, or a combination of the two is likely the reason. Boston Deep Sea Trawlers, England, had this vessel built for them in Poland. At the time there were several new British fishing vessels built in Poland. Boston Deep Sea Trawlers named this one with the BOSTON prefix so common with many of their vessels.

This list will give one a description of most of the Canadian ships that were, should have been, or whatever the terminology, at the end of radiotelegraph in Canada. Radiotelegraph ended officially about 15 years after I composed this list and as can be seen some of these ships should have carried a radio officer up until the end. I have also added a few ships since then of interest.

Continued in Section 12

October 30, 2007

This is the Twelfth and Final Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

I felt I should have known these ships well enough to locate the call sign for each. As can be seen I failed to locate a portion of this information. Years ago the VCS station was one of the few organizations in the country to receive a list of the radio call signs and equipment fitted in Canadian ships. Due to budget restrictions this publication was terminated. Every vessel of every description should have been listed correctly in the International Telecommunication Union Publications. There were so few, including our yachts, fishing vessels, warships, any vessel registered in Canada that any one person should have been able to easily keep this information up to date if they stayed awake at least half of the working day. The lists of many of the Canadian ships in the International Telecommunication Union Publications were incorrect, such as the fishery patrol vessels were listed as cargo vessels and so on. Our warships were not listed for security reasons. One can easily get their call signs because they "make their number" while entering and leaving port and for this reason it makes this excuse a bit ridiculous. The Canadian warships were listed in the International Telecommunication Union Publications until the 1960's. All Canadian call signs should have been listed randomly from our international blocks of call signs. Our warships, coast guard ships, and so on that have been issued special prefixes over the years stand out like a sore thumb. If they had been mixed up with all the other ships no one would have paid any attention to them.

To give an example of what it was like for foreign stations to communicate with the Canadian fleet we had no better example than the evening of January 25th, 1980. For some reason the M.V. ALGOSEA with call sign VODB wanted to communicate with the United States Coast Guard and called same on 2182 kilohertz. 2182 kilohertz was radiotelephone only. The U. S. Coast Guard kept answering each call but to our knowledge communications was never established. An hour or so later Chatham Radio WCC called ALGOSEA (on 500 kHz radiotelegraph) but she did not carry a radio operator so no contact was made, and another telegram had to be paid for and go undelivered.



Wayne Farrar, George S. Butts Photographs Limited

MV ALGOSEA.

The flags flying mean nothing other than those on board knew a photograph of her was to be taken and they simply flew the flags to add some colour.

Another good example of the confusion that took place then was with the Captain of the BAIE COMEAU 2 with call sign VCBD. He was phoning the Canadian National Telegraph Office direct with any messages. On top of the regular message charges there were the marine telephone duplex charges. A bit ridiculous to say the least! Whatever prompted this practice must have been something stupid or at least involved a lot of ignorance to say the least.

Call signs have always been a point of interest to me. As you can see from the above list of ships, there was no rhyme or reason behind the practice of issuing these important characters of our day to day job. The assignment of call signs to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation transmitters from the international block of call signs assigned to Chile, and the assignment of call signs to the Canadian National Railroad transmitters assigned to Morocco made absolutely no sense and actually defeated the purpose of these call signs.

The Canadian Coast Guard made it mandatory for all ships of sixty-five feet or longer to advise the past history of the vessel and any move they so much as contemplated while in Canadian waters. This would have made for an excellent point to use as the division for all Canadian vessels between the four letter call sign and the other thing, two or three letters and four digits. As near as I can determine the six character call sign came about in this country in order to copy the call signs of the United States. At least that is as close as I can come to an explanation for the first of these. At the time we had plenty four letter combinations so there seems to be no other reason. Right after World War II the United States went to this system because of the number of call signs it needed for the many small pleasure craft being fitted with radiotelephone. Canada followed suit with a call sign consisting of a CY prefix followed by four digits. Since, this had been broken down as follows: CG and four digits – Government vessels, CZ or VG and four digits – West Coast, VA and four digits – Great Lakes, and VC or VY and four digits – East Coast. This would be quite adequate providing they had been assigned permanently (they were not), providing they had not been assigned to radiotelegraph stations (they had been), and providing they had been properly entered in the International Telecommunication Union Publications.

Shortly after this system of two letter prefixes the Department of Communications came out with another call sign, the one with a three-letter prefix and four digits. The first two letters of the three-letter prefix were taken from Canada's international allotment of call signs. These call signs were assigned from Regional Offices. If a licence was allowed to lapse for a period a vessel was often assigned a new call sign

when its licence was renewed. The same applied to a vessel that was licensed in one area and then renewed its licence in another area. Rather confusing for those who had to use them. There were many just plain errors. Several vessels were assigned a Land Station Licence with three letters followed by three digits. Sable Island was assigned three letters and three digits as an amateur radio station licence when VE1MTA had already been assigned for that purpose. This would not have occurred if there had been a licensed amateur operator in charge. The problem was that this confusion was not contained within our national borders, but was broadcast around the world for all to hear.

One could go on forever describing these call sign allotments and the advantages of radiotelegraph over radiotelephone. It is all a waste of time now because it has been replaced. The cliché that all ships used English as the international language of the sea could be accurate, but much of the English we heard sounded nothing like English to us. Many a duplex radiotelephone call was made whereby the operator, after many attempts, managed to decipher the phone number only, and the ships call sign. Fortunately the ship was listed in the International Telecommunication Union Publications and the guesstimate on the phone number proved accurate.

One evening I witnessed an incident. Our Chief Engineer asked our Captain, "How in hell can you talk over that thing?" meaning the single side-band in the chart room. The Captain answered to the effect that he sat in front of it and closed his eyes very tight, concentrated real hard, and managed to get the most of what was being said. Is that communications? It was unreal, when all the Captains had to do was write on a piece of paper, hand it to their radio officer and wait for a reply. It was amazing that they would put up with it for hours on end to get a brief question answered that a radio officer could get in seconds.



Linda Mason

This is the MV GERMA LIONEL leaving Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, for Belfast, Northern Ireland, with a lumber cargo December 1979. The village of Dayspring is in the background. The ship has a pronounced list because it needs some water ballast for trim. Captain Jan Larsen did not want to use the silted water of the LaHave River and waited until he reached the clean water of the Atlantic. This was GERMA LIONEL's maiden voyage. These small ships that came for wood products in one form or another have disappeared. They all carried a Radio Officer.



Linda Mason

This is Radio Officer Alf Ditleff operating the radio station in MV GERMA LIONEL that had international call sign LHXX.

SITOR

They claim one piece of equipment performed better over the radio spectrum than radiotelegraph. This equipment was known as Simplex Telex over Radio and abbreviated SITOR. It was a form of radio Teletype or telex and outshone an operator for two reasons. One, it would operate on signals so poor the average operator could hear nothing. The other was the simple fact that when it was in the Automatic Request for Repetition mode, ARQ, before the receiver printed anything, it confirmed that it was received correctly from the transmitter. There were several forms of this unit created around the same time, but it had to be accepted on an international basis. After all forms had been assessed it was decided to accept the design of the Dutch Philips Company. It was an amazing piece of communications equipment, but to be honest the only thing I can think of that could make good use of it would be the old passenger liners, that have long since joined the Dodo birds and many other articles. It was something of this nature that Marconi was hoping to put into service when he first fitted ships with wireless. SITOR was faster than radiotelegraph and therefore capable of handling much more traffic. It still required an operator that knew how to tune it to the proper frequencies. Therefore, why any ship owner would go to the expense of installing it was a bit of a mystery.

The VCS station was fitted with one of these SITOR units and the first contact was with the tanker M.V. CLYTONEUS at 1400 GMT, October 6th, 1978. At the time she was estimating Holyrood, Newfoundland, by 0500 GMT, on October 11th, coming in from Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela. When this VCS SITOR was placed in service it did little to justify the electric power it consumed. Some of this lack of use was the VCS stations fault. It was not hooked into the regular telex system so that the ship could call directly into any office telex machine ashore and be billed for the time it was connected to any landline telex machine. The VCS station charged for any service via SITOR by the word as though the ship had used radiotelegraph.



John Rae VEIAGN and Paul Britton



John Rae VE1AGN and Paul Britton

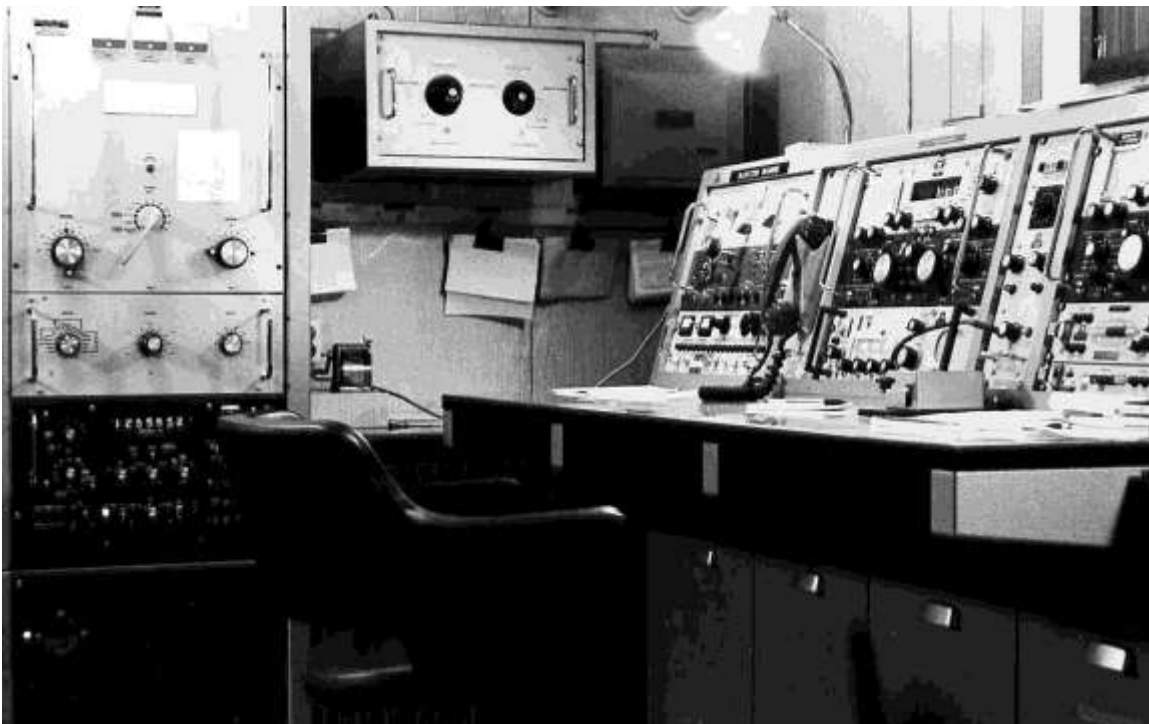
This is the Aircom five kilowatt SITOR transmitter at the VCS transmitter building, Pennant, Nova Scotia on May 19th, 1980.



Skyfotos Limited, Kent, with compliments Ocean Transport and Trading Limited
MV CLYTONEUS



Electrical Officer Terry Trueman MV Clytoneus



Electrical Officer Terry Trueman MV Clytoneus



Electrical Officer Terry Trueman MV Clytoneus



Electrical Officer Terry Trueman MV Clytoneus



Electrical Officer Terry Trueman MV Clytoneus

This is the Radio Room in CLYTONEUS with call sign GUWG showing the first ship station to contact Halifax Coast Guard Radio VCS via SITOR.

The VCS station did broadcasts via SITOR and the weather was broken up in various parts rather than the two complete forecasts. Learning that anyone copied these first broadcasts was a shock because the basic behavior of the beast produced this problem or characteristic. Any operator at sea did not leave it tuned to the VCS station frequencies. For example, Les Sells, the operator in the CLYTONEUS left his SITOR tuned to Bermuda Radio VRT where he received the majority of his operational traffic. When this SITOR was first put on the air in what was known as the FEC mode, it was transmitting in an advanced form of radio Teletype. When it was used with the ARQ mode with the self call numbers assigned to each unit, it performed in a more or less confidential condition. At least the amount of secrecy that mode provided should have been ample for any commercial communications. While in the ARQ mode the receiving unit confirmed each character with the transmitting unit to assure accuracy. This was known as the hand-shaking method.

The third mode available was a combination of the other two. This mode, the SEL FEC mode used the self-call numbers but the messages were sent in the same way as the FEC mode. The difference was that the receiving unit with the self-call numbers placed on the transmitting SITOR was the only unit that would receive any messages transmitted.

In other words, the receiving SITOR used its transmitter in only the ARQ mode. The receiving SITOR alarms were activated in the ARQ and SEL FEC modes only (the two modes that required the self call numbers). These alarms alerted the operator at the receiving SITOR of incoming traffic.

The first VCS station SITOR boiled down to the lack of a fleet of Canadian ships fitted with these SITOR stations. We could have made use of this unit transmitting the lengthy competition messages to the Coast Guard ships, but by the time the various bureaucratic departments produced these units aboard these ships and had them working properly it would have taken many years. Transmitting these lengthy messages would have left the other radiotelegraph circuits available to the merchant ships, those that were paying for the service. Those government messages were free from charges and that was a poor way to look at any of the service at the VCS station. If that had become the deciding factor on the station's operations it would have been a different station entirely. Canadian National planned to fit all their ferries with these SITOR units and some of them actually did call the VCS station with these units. It was one frustrating piece of equipment at first because the majority of those who tried to use it managed to activate the VCS station SITOR alarm only. A few of the Coast Guard ships were fitted but before it amounted to anything the Coast Guard ships were fitted with SATCOM – satellite communications.

Apparently others felt the same towards SITOR as I did. The Federal Communications Commission in the United States issued licences to six amateur radio operators with the idea that they would be able to improve this system so that it would be more practical. The basic system did show a lot of potential and should have been an excellent means of passing large quantities of messages over the radio spectrum in a more reliable fashion. It would be hard to believe that the average merchant ship would have any use for such equipment and once again amateur radio had to step in and make the improvements for the commercial radio world. The amateur system was known as AMTOR for Amateur Telex over Radio.

It is interesting to note that one Greek ship arrived in Halifax with a huge pile of paper piled up behind his SITOR unit. No one could possibly read all that this entailed because he had simply left his SITOR tuned to the VCS station SITOR and had copied all that this station had transmitted – mainly weather and NOTSHIP broadcasts during his voyage or probably over a week. One could only wish that they had the contract to provide this ship with the telex paper it used.

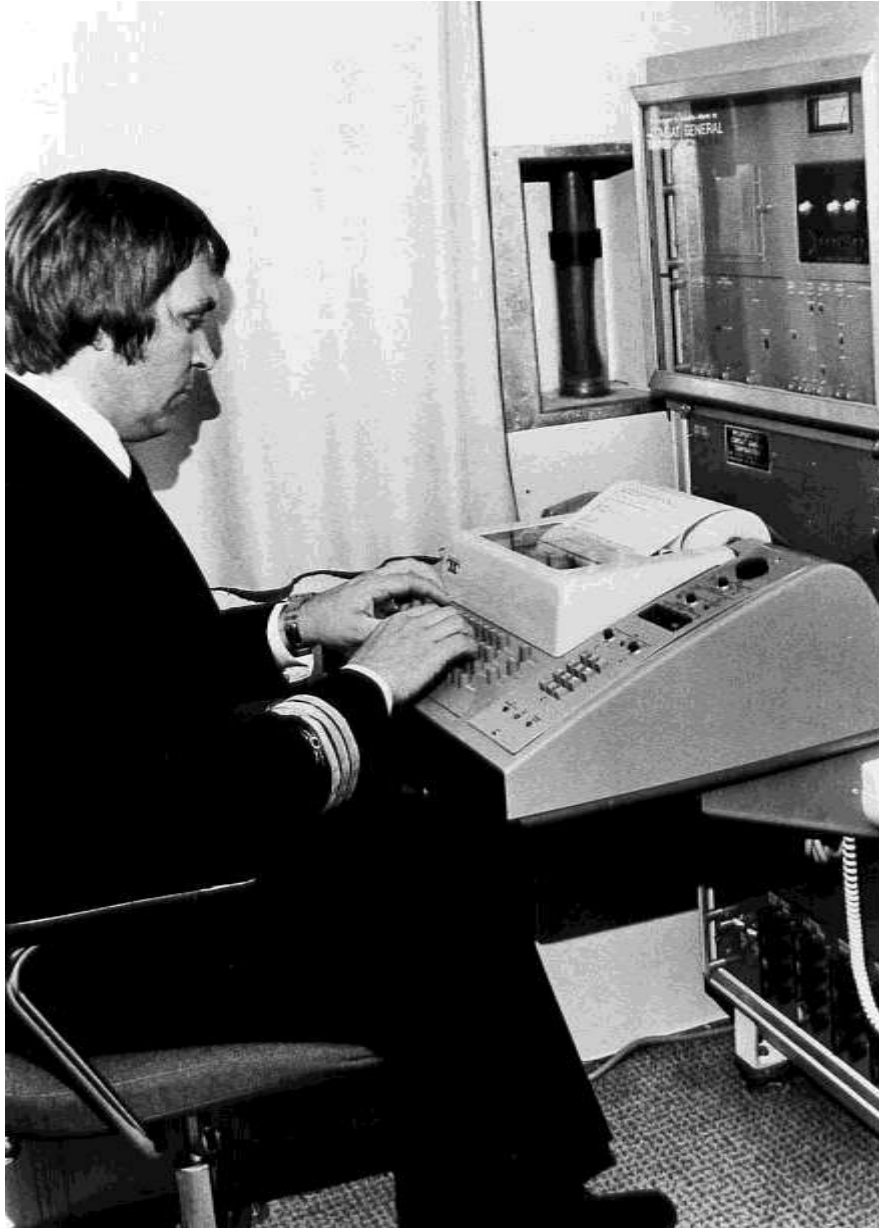
During the winter of 1987-1988 the VCS station received another major up-grade in the form of a more or less new station. Actually a new section was built right over the top of the old station and one resident of Sambro stated that he did not realize the old building was so ugly until they made this modification. When this new station, one might say, opened in May 1988 the SITOR was connected properly. It was hooked into the landline telex system and any use made of it was charged on a time factor only. It then worked much better and by this time those at sea were more familiar with their equipment and managed to make some use of this service.

SATELLITE

The satellite communications for ships deserves a brief mention. The VCS station had nothing whatsoever to do with this system. We had a few ships call us on our regular telex machines using this equipment when it first became available. This was the future means of communicating with most anything that was capable of traveling great distances. There are several basic facts worthy of note. The first and foremost is that the ship is not like the aircraft and capable of high altitudes and thereby long distances on the very high frequencies. Satellite communications is more or less the reverse of this feature. Hang the radio equipment at a high altitude and let it relay anything it hears. This of course provides for a very clear or interference free means of communicating. It also makes it very convenient for regular telephone conversations, telex, facsimile, and the multitude of these various electronic gadgets that have been made available over the years and require much radio spectrum space.

Providing I have interpreted my research correctly, this system had problems when first placed in service. The major naval powers became rather frustrated over the use of this communications system because it was so easy to put the satellite out of commission. Apparently it takes little to knock one of these satellites out, and if we can believe the information we were permitted on the subject, this is exactly what had been taking place with a number of these units over the years when first placed in service. For some time I felt that the United States Navy was going to have as little as possible to do with this system. Then an article on the subject claimed the U. S. Navy was having a change of heart and was going to agree on absorbing much of the cost for this satellite system, whereby it would use half the circuits available and leave the other half for the world's merchant fleet. The U. S. Navy planned to absorb most of the cost of the merchant fleet's half of the satellite in order to see much of the world's merchant fleet fitted by the year 1985. I would say that they achieved this goal from the decrease in message traffic handled at the VCS station. There were many Canadian ships fitted with Satellite Navigation equipment at this time but that was a different system completely. The first two Canadian ships fitted with satellite communications were the Canadian Coast Guard Ship JOHN A. MACDONALD with call sign CGBK, and the CANMAR KIGIORIAK with call sign VCFN. These two were no different from the foreign ships, such as Britain's QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, with the old QUEEN MARY's call sign GBTT. They complained bitterly of the very high cost involved in using the equipment and therefore ignored it as much as possible. In other words, why should one group of people, mainly the American taxpayer, be expected to pay so much for so little? It was rather ridiculous when one looked at it realistically.

CANMAR KIGIORIAK on her way north to the Beaufort Sea wanted to know if the weather service would reimburse the cost of her sending weather observations on this unit, and if not they would transmit them when in range of a radiotelephone station only. She did not carry a radio officer on this trip although the company apparently planned to put one on board. The same old excuse we heard over and over.



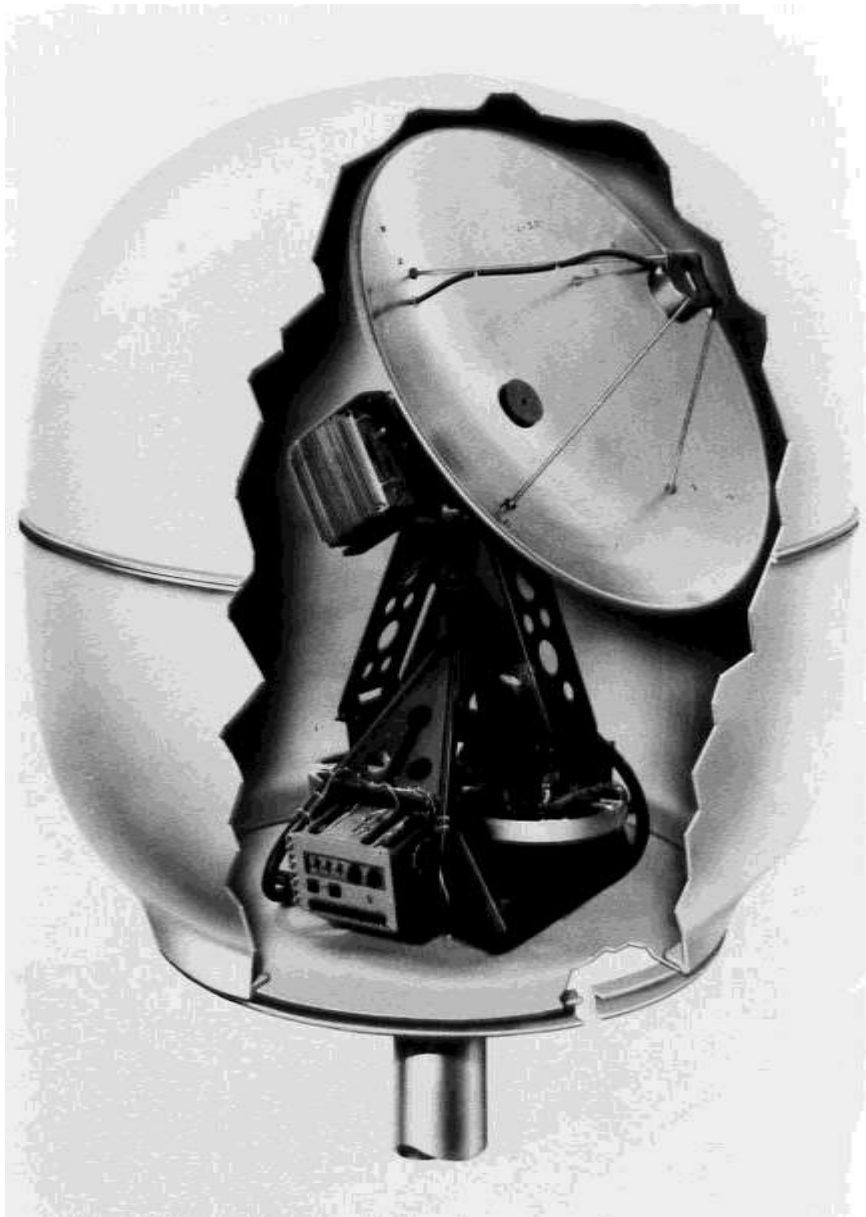
Marine Engineering/Log

This is Chief Radio Officer Per A. Mikalsen of the ROYAL VIKING SEA testing the below-decks terminal unit of the cruise vessel's new MARISAT satellite communications system around 1979.



Marine Engineering/Log

The MARISAT Antenna on ROYAL VIKING SEA designed by Scientific-Atlanta Inc. was housed in a protective fiberglass cover. The antenna is continuously pointed to the satellite.



Marine Engineering/Log

This is a cutaway view of the above-decks system of Magnavox MX 111 MARISAT communications terminal. System allowed operation with roll angles of up to 27 degrees and pitch of 10 degrees.



Wamboldt-Waterfield, Halifax, Nova Scotia

This is the ROYAL VIKING SKY docking at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on May 15th, 1980. The three cruise ships, ROYAL VIKING SEA, ROYAL VIKING SKY and ROYAL VIKING STAR were identical. The above-decks unit of the Satellite Communications System fitted in ROYAL VIKING SKY can be seen at the base of the mast along with her Direction Finder Loop Antenna.

Stan Cairns, the Station Operations Supervisor at VCS at the time, asked me if I knew of any way the JOHN A. MACDONALD could communicate with the Dartmouth Office other than by the satellite system while she was in the Beaufort Sea. Apparently he had received this request from somewhere higher up the bureaucratic ladder. Needless to say this request did not sit too well with me. God knows my good friend

Bill Demish worked hard in order to get radiotelegraph installed at Inuvik Radio VFA when we were stationed there. In other words the question made no sense to me. The same ones that were looking for the answer were the same ones who were already paying for an excellent system and not using it. They had two operators in JOHN A. MACDONALD, telex in Inuvik, and operators there. All they had to do was get on the ball and get these characters working. Needless to say, I then went "around to the back door" and checked this from that area. There were a number of these CANMAR ships that had been in the Beaufort Sea for a few years looking for oil. A number of them carried radio officers. These operators told me that when they first went up there they tried to use VFA Inuvik but the station was completely hopeless so they installed their own station. Some consideration should have been given to sending a few good radiotelegraph operators to the various northern stations so that these ships could have had good communications.

The landline-telegraph operator, the aeradio telegraph operator and the marine radiotelegraph operator have all joined the Dodo birds and many other obsolete objects. Many of them can be heard on the radiotelegraph portion of the amateur radio bands keeping the dust off their old keys. Many of the landline operators formed their own clubs and once a year or so hooked up their equipment and did some reminiscing. A few of these occasionally phoned a former friend on the line and had a chat via their sounders over a standard telephone.

The Russians and the Japanese were probably the ones with the best radiotelegraph stations fitted in ships. The Russians apparently used radiotelegraph to the point their vessels on their inland rivers and lakes carried operators. These guys were good. When I visited the operators in the VASYA KOROBKO with call sign USDU I found them making a modification to their Direction Finder. They had received word from home to make this change and they were down to removing resistors and capacitors, shifting them about to accomplish this change. VASYA KOROBKO was a small general freighter but she carried two operators. The Chief had a number of years in the trade including some time in a Russian Icebreaker. His junior had not been long out of school. They told me they came from the Leningrad area and had to spend five years in radio school before they were allowed on a ship. As I received my second class certificate from less than one year in radio school, there has to be something to be said about who is likely to be the more efficient. Having contacted the Chief over the air prior to my visit, I well knew that I would need my seat belt hooked up if I intended to stay with him at the top of his limit on the key. Actually he could have quite easily buried me in the dust from my own speaker if he had opened up on me. But there were two items I found more interesting than the others from this visit: Their tools were no better or no worse than ours and the soft rubber handle grips on his pliers appeared not only the same material as ours, but they were the same shade of red. The big surprise was when he let me sit in his operating position. Whoever designed that had done some operating. I never felt more at home in any operating position. Even the transmitter meters were tilted so that a mere glance would indicate the full details of what was taking place within her innards.

VASYA KOROBKO was fitted with two main transmitters and two main receivers at the operating position. There was a choice of an ordinary hand key, two sidewinders – a form of semi-automatic key similar to our bug, or a keyboard key – a typewriter keyboard that sent Morse code. The latter was stowed away because the operators preferred the sidewinders. In addition to this she was fitted with the standard equipment: radar, loran, direction finder, and facsimile for copying weather maps transmitted over the regular radio frequencies. All this equipment was well constructed and looked as though it had been built for an Army tank rather than a ship. It looked reliable and as though it could be easily operated and maintained.

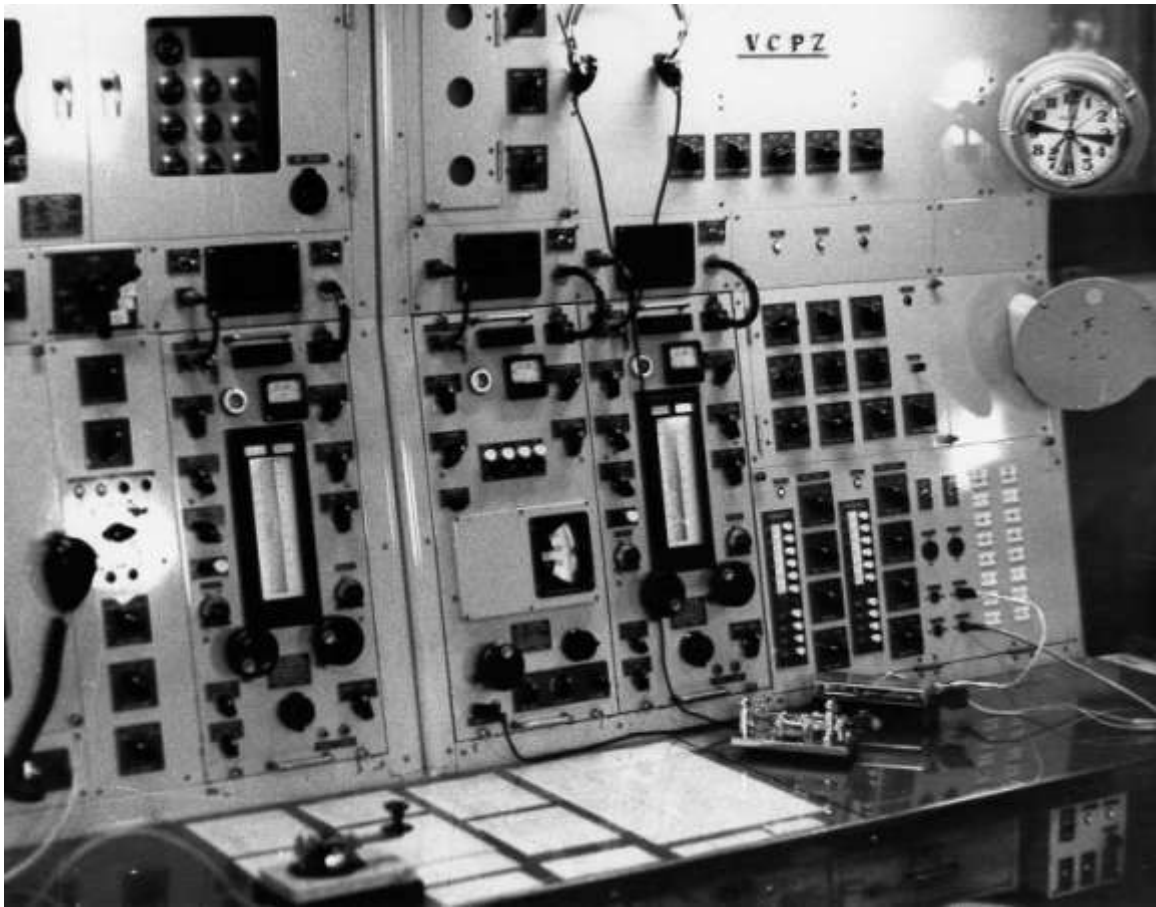
I had taken some old radio publications and had copied all the latest weather maps on my facsimile with hope this would give me access to her radio room. My British Mufax Facsimile had been working at its best but on seeing the maps this Russian Chief had copied from the same transmissions (CFH), I then wished I had thrown mine overboard. His were much better. I was most impressed by this visit. The ship was most impressive; clean, carpeted throughout, house plants in the various cabins, even a small theatre with a movie showing Momma with tears in her eyes while her son went off with the Army to machine-gun the hell out of someone or something.

The Canadian vessel FERBEC with call sign VCPZ started out in 1966 as the Japanese vessel FUGAKU MARU with call sign JFFM. Paul du Mesnil spent some time as her radio officer and also on the VCS station staff. Paul was the last Canadian seagoing radio officer as well. He was most impressed with the Japanese radio station that had been retained in the transfer of FUGAKU MARU to the Canadian flag. The direction finder of this station was fitted in the chart room as most were. A jack was fitted next to this direction finder. This jack permitted the operator to take his telegraph key from the radio room and plug it in at the direction finder, in order to key his main transmitter and use the direction finder as a receiver. This arrangement was a big asset in handling the communication involved in a distress situation.



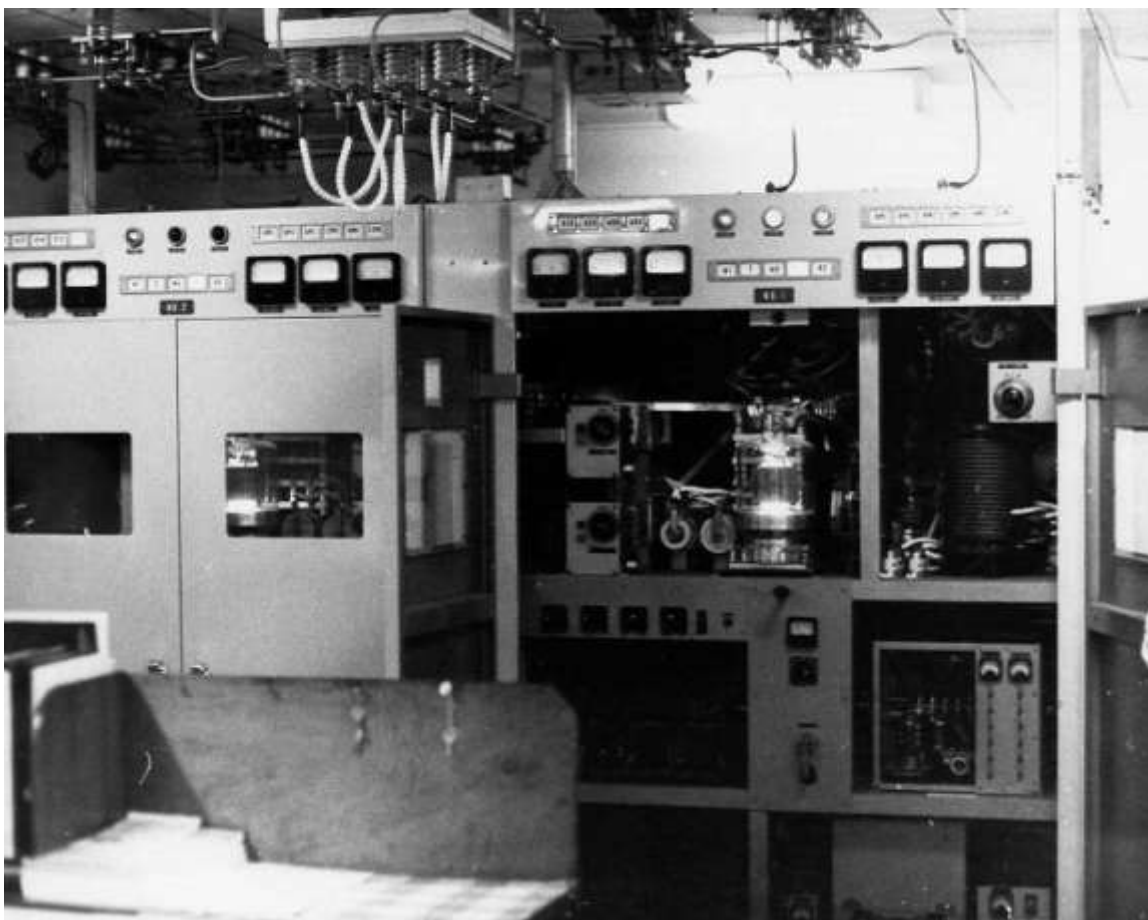
Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is the MV FERBEC the largest ship in the Canadian Merchant Fleet 1979.



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is the main operating position in MV FERBEC.



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is the main transmitter in MV FERBEC.

The station in FERBEC was the older model containing many tubes in the circuits rather than transistors. I managed to visit the SUN BEGONIA one of the last of the small freighters to load lumber products at Weymouth North, Nova Scotia. SUN BEGONIA was a small tramp freighter registered in Panama and was assigned call sign H3IM. Her station was a transistor or solid-state Japanese station. She had mainly the bare essentials required by law. Her main radio station contained tape recorders on timers whereby the operator could copy anything he wanted while off duty. For example he could set a tape recorder to copy a traffic list transmitted just before he was to go back on duty. If there was a message he could get it when he first went on duty without having to wait for the next traffic list. He could record a weather broadcast made while off duty. He could also record anything and retain it for future use and that was another big asset in the operation of an efficient radio station. This station had a most pleasant musical sound while transmitting. One most pleasing that made transmitting most enjoyable.

This all goes to prove that those nations that fully appreciated radiotelegraph communications went to a lot of trouble to make the job as convenient as possible for their operators. Many of the stations that I sailed with often left me feeling they were built as cheaply as possible with no thought given to operation or maintenance. Many of them appeared to have been thrown into the radio room and bolted down where they landed.

Not only the Russians and Japanese, but many other nations such as the United States, Australia, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and the United Kingdom put a lot of effort into fitting their ships with good radiotelegraph communications.

CANADIAN COAST STATIONS

The following is a list of the last of the Canadian Coast Stations. All were identified by the suffix Coast Guard Radio via radiotelephone. Those with an * were fitted with radiotelegraph when closed and therefore used the call sign for identification.

VAF Alert Bay, British Columbia
VAG Bull Harbour, British Columbia



David Conrad

Bull Harbour Coast Guard Radio VAG 1978



David Conrad

Bull Harbour Coast Guard Radio VAG 1978



David Conrad

Bull Harbour Coast Guard Radio VAG 1978.
This is Pam Conrad coming from a visit with her dad Radio Operator Dave Conrad.

VFC	Cambridge Bay, North West Territories *
VAX	Canso, Nova Scotia – VAX Closed at 201100 GMT June 1984
VDQ	Cardinal, Ontario
VOK	Cartwright, Labrador *
VCA	Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
VAP	Churchill, Manitoba *
VOO	Comfort Cove, Newfoundland *
VAC	Comox, British Columbia
VFU6	Coppermine, North West Territories
VFU	Coral Harbour, North West Territories *
VFF	Frobisher Bay, North West Territories *
VFZ	Goose Bay, Labrador *
VCN	Grindstone, Quebec *
VCS	Halifax, Nova Scotia *
VAL	Inoucdjouac, Quebec
VFA	Inuvik, North West Territories *
VAW	Killinek, North West Territories *
VCF	Mont Joli, Quebec *
VFN	Montreal, Quebec *
VBF	Port Burwell, Ontario
VAV	Post-de-la-Baliene, Quebec
VAJ	Prince Rupert, British Columbia *
VCC	Quebec, Quebec *
VFR	Resolute, North West Territories *
VCG	Riviere-au-Renard, Quebec *
VCD	Riviere-du-Loup, Quebec
VAH	Sandspit, British Columbia
VBE	Sarnia, Ontario
VBB	Sault Sainte-Marie, Ontario *



David Conrad

Dave Conrad operating Sault Ste Marie Coast Guard Radio VBB 1990

VCK Sept Iles, Quebec *
 VOJ Stephenville, Newfoundland *
 VCO Sydney, Nova Scotia * VCO was the last Canadian station to use radiotelegraph.
 VCM St. Anthony, Newfoundland *
 VAR Saint John, New Brunswick * Radiotelegraph was removed several years before the station closed.
 VON St. John's, Newfoundland *
 VCP St. Lawrence, Newfoundland *
 VBA Thunder Bay, Ontario VBA operated radiotelegraph remotely for VAP Churchill, Manitoba, for a few years before it closed.

 VAE Tofino, British Columbia *
 VBG Toronto, Ontario *
 VAI Vancouver, British Columbia *
 VBC Wiarton, Ontario
 VAU Yarmouth, Nova Scotia *



Radio Officer David Vail VE1GM

This is the old VAU Yarmouth radio station operating position at Rockville, Nova Scotia

THE CRUISE SHIPS

The following is a list of most of the cruise ships sailing the world's oceans at the time radiotelegraph was terminated. One will note that some of these are the last of the old passenger liners. They all carried radio officers and called the VCS station occasionally. This was mainly while carrying Canadian passengers. It was a shame we did not have a better telegraph service to offer them – something like the one available via Portishead Radio GKA at the time.

The following list includes call sign, name, year built and country of registry. The former call signs, names, and country of registry appear just below the present name if applicable.

UERU ALEEXANDRE PUSHKIN 1965 Russia

SXXE	AMERIKANIS		1952	Greece
Former:				
GNCF	KENYA CASTLE		United Kingdom	
IBBO	ANGELINA LAURO		1939	Italy
Former:				
PGOF	ORANJE	Netherlands		
GRFP	ARCADIA		1954	United Kingdom
SYMB	ATLAS		1951	Greece
Former:				
PHFR	RYNDAM	Netherlands		
DLCT	BOHEME		1968	Germany
LKCL	BOLERO		1972	Norway
SZWE	BRITANNIS		1932	Greece
Former:				
WHEX	LURLINE	United States		
WHEX	MATSONIA	United States		
WHEX	MONTEREY	United States		
GBVC	CANBERRA		1961	United Kingdom
DECC	CARIBE		1968	Germany
Former:				
----	SVEA STA			
ELUU	FREEPORT 1	Liberia		
ICCO	CARLA C		1952	Italy
Former:				
FNRY	FLANDRE	France		
HOKL	CARNIVALE		1956	Panama
Former:				
SYXX	QUEEN ANNA MARIA	Greece		
GVCN	EMPRESS OF BRITAIN	United Kingdom		



Canadian Pacific 18656

This is a portion of the Radio Room in Canadian Pacific's EMPRESS OF BRITAIN with call sign GVCN.
This photograph was taken when this vessel was first launched in 1956.



Canadian Pacific 18678

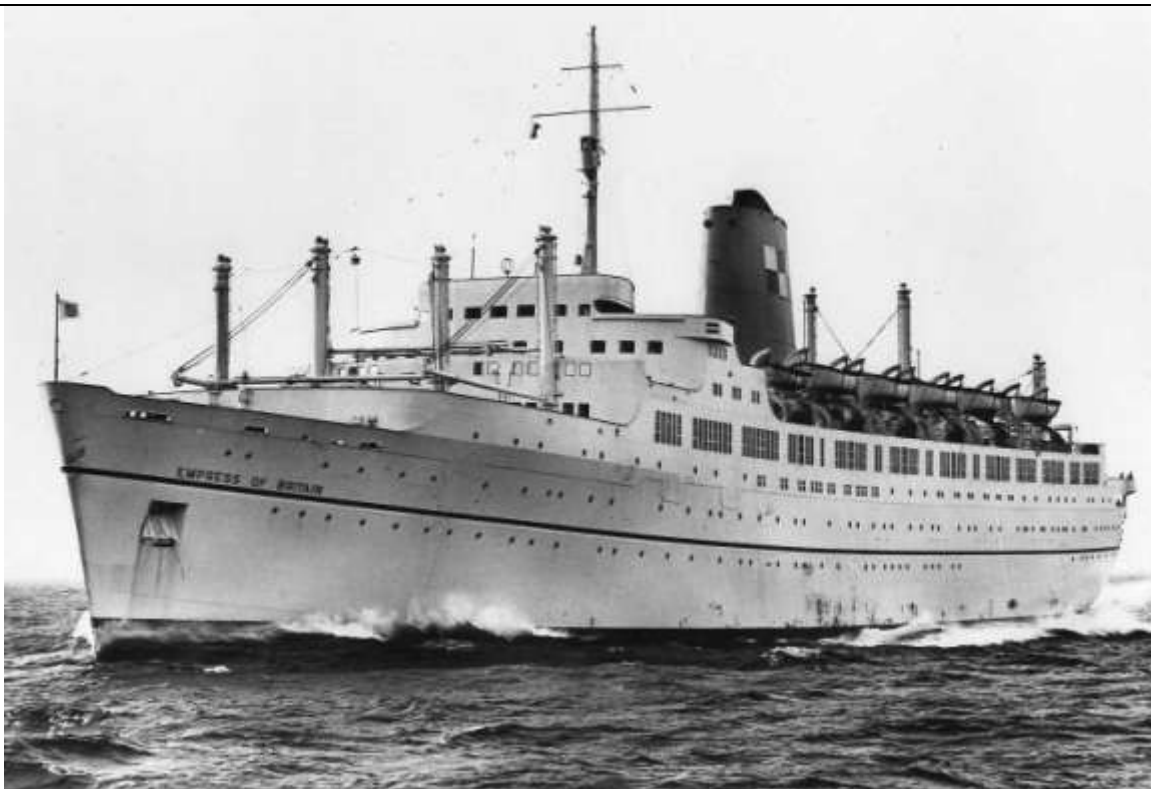
This is the Radio Room in Canadian Pacific's EMPRESS OF BRITAIN taken from the opposite direction.

Note the Lodestone Direction Finder in the Radio Room the proper place for the direction finder.



World Ship Society

EMPRESS OF BRITAIN in 1956



Canadian Pacific 8429

Another view of the EMPRESS OF BRITAIN

GUNP	CUNARD COUNTESS	1975	United Kingdom
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GUNN	CUNARD PRINCESS	1974	United Kingdom
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The last time I worked this one she had quite a chirp to her transmitter and this made her call sign sound even better.

SYVX DANAE 1955 Greece

Former:

---- THERISOS EXPRESS

GTFF PORT MELBOURNE United Kingdom

SYWX DAPHNE 1964 Greece

Former:

---- AKROTIRI EXPRESS

GSXQ PORT SYDNEY United Kingdom

3FYT EMERALD SEAS 1944 Panama

Former:

---- ATLANTIS

KNBY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT United States

---- LEILANI United States

---- LAGUARDIA United States

---- GENERAL W. P. RICHARDSON United States war brides' ship.

ELMQ FAIRSEA 1956 Liberia

Former:

---- FAIRLAND

GVDQ CARINTHIA United Kingdom

ELPH FAIRWIND 1957 Liberia

Former:

GVTF SYLVANIA United Kingdom

IBFW FEDERICO C 1958 Italy

IBWQ FLAVIA 1947 Italy

Former:

GSWR MEDIA United Kingdom

SXTD GOLDEN ODYSSEY 1974 Greece

GBBM ISLAND PRINCESS 1971 United Kingdom

Former:

GBBM ISLAND VENTURE United Kingdom

IBIH ITALIA 1967 Italy

SXBB ITHACA 1956 Greece

Former:			
CSBG	AMELIA DE MELLO	Portugal	
4XWR	ZION	Israel	
ULSB	KAZAKHSTAN	1976	Russia
ICLN	LEONARDO DA VINCI	1960	Italy
UYXD	MAKSIM GORKIE	1969	Russia
Former:			
DABR	HAMBURG	Germany	
DABR	HANSEATIC	Germany	



Wamboldt-Waterfield, Halifax, Nova Scotia

This is the Russian Cruise Ship (Love Boat) MAKSIM GORKIE passing Maugher Beach Light Station inbound to Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 10th, 1981.

3EQN	MARDI GRAS	1961	Panama
Former:			
GHLA	EMPRESS OF CANADA	United Kingdom	

FOSX	MERMOZ	1957	France
Former:			

FOSX	JEAN MERMOZ	France		
UQTT	MIKHAIL LERMONTOV		1972	Russia
SYBO	NAVARINO		1957	Greece
Former:				
SLQT	GRIPSHOLM	Sweden		
LAPJ	NORDIC PRINCE		1970	Norway
LITA	NORWAY		1961	Norway
Former:				
FNRR	FRANCE	France		
HOOE	OCEANIC		1965	Panama
EWBK	ODESSA		1974	Russia
Former:				
OUUL	COPENHAGEN	Denmark		
GVSN	ORIANA		1960	United Kingdom
3FQB	ORIENTAL EMPRESS		1948	Panama
Former:				
WBYN	PRESIDENT WILSON	United States		
GBCF	PACIFIC PRINCESS		1971	United Kingdom
Former:				
GBCF	SEA VENTURE	United Kingdom		
GBTT	QUEEN ELIZABETH 2		1969	United Kingdom
HPEY	REGINA PRIMA		1939	Panama
Former:				
SYHI	REGINA	Greece		
WTJO	PRESIDENT HOOVER	United States		
WTJO	PANAMA	United States		
WTJO	JAMES PARKER	United States		
WTJO	PANAMA	United States		
PJSU	ROTTERDAM		1959	Netherlands Antilles
LECK	ROYAL VIKING SEA		1973	Norway

LADE	ROYAL VIKING SKY	1972	Norway
LILY	ROYAL VIKING STAR	1972	Norway
LFSA	SAGAFJORD	1965	Norway
GBBA	SEA PRINCESS	1966	United Kingdom
Former:			
SGON	KUNGSHOLM	Sweden	
LKQH	SKYWARD	1969	Norway
LNVP	SONG OF NORWAY	1969	Norway
LCKF	SOUTHWARD	1971	Norway
LCJK	STARWARD	1968	Norway
PJSF	STATENDAM	1957	Netherlands Antilles
SPYM	STEFAN BATORY	1952	Poland (VCS worked this one regularly.)
Former:			
----	MASSDAM		
SZLX	STELLA OCEANIO	1965	Greece
Former:			
----	APHRODITE		
SYWT	STELLA SOLARIS	1953	Greece
Former:			
----	STELLA V		
FOEH	CAMBODGE	France	
GBFT	SUN PRINCESS	1972	United Kingdom
Former:			
GBFT	SPIRIT OF LONDON	United Kingdom	
LIZA	SUN VIKING	1971	Norway
LESS	SUNWARD II	1971	Norway

Former:
GOZC CUNARD ADVENTURER United Kingdom

5LGK UNIVERSE 1953 Liberia

Former:
5LGK UNIVERSE CAMPUS Liberia
---- ATLANTIC
---- BADGER MARINER

3FAQ VERA CRUZ 1957 Panama

Former:
3FAQ FREEPORT Panama
---- CARNIVALE
4XVF THEODOR HERZL Israel

LFVI VISTAFJORD 1973 Norway

This was more or less the last of the passenger vessels that used radiotelegraph. At this time there was a popular TV program called "The Love Boat" that increased the popularity of these vessels which became cruise ships. This became a very big business and operated out of Miami, Florida, mainly, especially during the winter months. These newer vessels did not use radiotelegraph. They used satellite communications with a typist to operate this equipment and telephone operators to operate the radiotelephone traffic via satellite. The radio officer position was terminated. It is hard for "old timers" to believe but by 2007 these cruise ships did not have a high frequency receiver on board. It was all satellite and VHF.

THE CODES

There were many codes used to transmit the various languages around the world during the period of radiotelegraph. The standard international radio code was "The Continental Code". A dash was equal to three dots. The space between parts of the same letter was equal to one dot. The space between two letters was equal to three dots. The space between two words was equal to seven dots. There were seven characters that permitted the transmission of various accented letters of the foreign languages such as French, Spanish, Polish, German, and so on. Those that used the same alphabet as Russia also used this code and used at least some of these seven characters.

I do not have a means of printing the various codes here. The one you will often see as "The Morse code" is the old landline or American code. The easiest way to distinguish between the two is to look up the letter C or letter Y. If the C is a dash dot dash dot and the Y is a dash dot dash dash it is "The Continental Code". C in "The Morse code" was dot dot space dot and Y was dot dot space dot dot.

Actually these codes were numerous going back to around 1600. They all had some use in some way but the two that saw use at the VCS station and around North America were the two described above.

THE GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM AND DIGITAL SELECTIVE CALLING

When the radio officer was removed from the ship the Master (Captain) and Mates had to perform the communications duties. These people were given training and were supposed to have this training via a course of instruction in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. This is abbreviated to GMDSS. I have no interest in what is involved. The equipment involved is apparently capable of Digital Selective

Calling whereby the operator can select or direct his call to one station, the stations in a certain fleet, or any and all stations. This system is abbreviated to DSC.

I felt the International Telecommunication Union had come out with a statement that on a certain date a vessel could sail without radiotelegraph providing she was fitted with GMDSS and her officers held licences to operate this equipment. Apparently this was not the case because I wrote the Telecommunication Union for this date and statement. Their answer simply stated that if a ship was fitted with radiotelegraph it must carry a licensed radio officer to operate this equipment, and that ships started fitting radiotelephone years ago and no longer carried radiotelegraph. The answer made little sense to me.

The personal computer has taken over in leaps and bounds since the termination of the radio officer. The system of message handling known as e-mail has become very big via this equipment. One can send messages via this system through satellite to any ship that is equipped. The Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Military ships use this. One can send an e-mail message to anyone in these ships and when it is down-loaded these messages go to the individual addressee via their own personal computer giving a form of secrecy from the remainder of the crew. One does not have to be an officer. The various stokers, deckhands, and so on, are making good use of this type of message handling. A big, big difference from just a few years ago when nearly everything had to go through the radio room and often had to have the Captain's approval.

On January 22nd, 2002 I met a girl using the computer terminal at the Senior Citizens "Drop-In Centre" at the South Centre Mall, Spryfield, Nova Scotia. She uses this terminal and the one at the Spryfield Library to e-mail her friend, an oiler sailing in a flag of convenience freighter from Virginia to the Azores. I tried to explain to her the way she would have communicated in our time while I was at sea. I am convinced she did not believe me and found my description completely absurd. I believe it has now reached the point where no one will understand our old reliable communications scheme. But one thing is for certain, the excitement, the colour, or whatever the terminology, is long gone as well. The days of sweating over a telegraph key trying to pull some message in or send one out are long gone. I'm glad I experienced the excitement, the colour, or whatever the terminology.

THE INTERNATIONAL CALL SIGNS WHEN RADIOTELEGRAPH WAS TERMINATED

AAA – ALZ	USA
AMA – AOZ	Spain
APA – ASZ	Pakistan
ATA – AWZ	India
AXA – AXZ	Australia
AYA – AZZ	Argentine Republic
A2A – A2Z	Botswana
A3A – A3Z	Tonga
A4A – A4Z	Oman
A5A – A5Z	Bhutan
A6A – A6Z	United Arab Emirates
A7A – A7Z	Qatar
A8A – A8Z	Liberia
A9A – A9Z	Bahrain
BAA – BZZ	China
CAA – CEZ	Chile
CFA – CKZ	CANADA
CLA – CMZ	Cuba
CAN – CNZ	Morocco
COA – COZ	Cuba
CPA – CPZ	Bolivia
CQA – CUZ	Portugal

CVA – CXZ	Uruguay
CYA – CZZ	CANADA
C2A – C2Z	Nauru
C3A – C3Z	Andorra
C4A – C4Z	Cyprus
C5A – C5Z	Gambia
C6A – C6Z	Bahamas
C7A – C7Z	World Meteorological Organization
C8A – C9Z	Mozambique
DAA – DTZ	Germany
DUA – DZZ	Philippines
D2A – D3Z	Angola
D4A – D4Z	Cape Verde
D5A – D5Z	Liberia
D6A – D6Z	Comoros
D7A – D9Z	Korea
EAA – EHZ	Spain
EIA – EJZ	Ireland
EKA – EKZ	Russia
ELA – ELZ	Liberia
EMA – EOZ	Russia
EPA – EQZ	Iran
ERA – ERZ	Russia
ESA – ESZ	Estonia
ETA – ETZ	Ethiopia
EUA – EWZ	Byelorussia
EXA – EZZ	Russia
FAA – FZZ	France
GAA – GZZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
HAA – HAZ	Hungary
HBA – HBZ	Switzerland
HCA – HDZ	Ecuador
HEA – HEZ	Switzerland
HFA – HFZ	Poland
HGA – HGZ	Hungary
HIA – HIZ	Dominican Republic
HJA – HKZ	Colombia
HLA – HMZ	Korea
HNA – HNZ	Iraq
HOA – HPZ	Panama
HQA – HRZ	Honduras
HSA – HSZ	Thailand
HTA – HTZ	Nicaragua
HUA – HUZ	El Salvador
HVA – HVZ	Vatican State
HWA – HYZ	France
HZA – HZZ	Saudi Arabia
H2A – H2Z	Cyprus
H3A – H3Z	Panama
H4A – H4Z	Solomon Islands
H5A – H5Z	
H6A – H7Z	Nicaragua
H8A – H9Z	Panama
IAA – IZZ	Italy
JAA – JSZ	Japan
JTA – JVZ	Mongolia

JWA – JXZ	Norway
JYA – JYZ	Jordan
JZA – JZZ	Indonesia
J2A – J2Z	Djibouti
J3A – J3Z	Grenada
J4A – J4Z	Greece
J5A – J5Z	Guinea-Bissau
J6A – J6Z	Saint Lucia
J7A – J7Z	Dominican Republic
J8A – J8Z	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
J9A – J9Z	
KAA – KZZ	USA
LAA – LNZ	Norway
LOA – LWZ	Argentine Republic
LXA – LXZ	Luxembourg
LYA – LYZ	Lithuania
LZA – LZZ	Bulgaria
L2A – L9Z	Argentine Republic
MAA – MZZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
NAA – NZZ	USA
OAA – OCZ	Peru
ODA – ODZ	Lebanon
OEA – OEZ	Austria
OFA – OJZ	Finland
OKA – OMZ	Czechoslovakia
ONA – OTZ	Belgium
OUA – OZZ	Denmark
O2A – O9Z	
PAA – PIZ	Netherlands
PJA – PJZ	Netherlands Antilles
PKA – POZ	Indonesia
PPA – PYZ	Brazil
P2A – P2Z	Papua New Guinea
P3A – P3Z	Cyprus
P4A – P4Z	Netherlands Antilles
P5A – P9Z	Korea
QAA – QZZ	Service Abbreviations
RAA – RZZ	Russia
SAA – SMZ	Sweden
SNA – SRZ	Poland
SSA – SSM	Egypt
SSN – STZ	Sudan
SUA – SUZ	Egypt
SVA – SZZ	Greece
S2A – S3Z	Bangladesh
S4A – S4Z	
S5A – S5Z	
S6A – S6Z	Singapore
S7A – S7Z	Seychelles
S8A – S8Z	Transkei
S9A – S9Z	Sao Tome and Principe
TAA – TCZ	Turkey
TDA – TDZ	Guatemala
TEA – TEZ	Costa Rica
TFA – TFZ	Iceland
TGA – TGZ	Guatemala

THA – THZ	France
TIA – TIZ	Costa Rica
TJA – TJZ	Cameroon
TKA – TKZ	France
TLA – TLZ	Central African Empire
TMA – TMZ	France
TNA – TNZ	Congo
TOA – TQZ	France
TRA – TRZ	Gabon Republic
TSA – TSZ	Tunisia
TTA – TTZ	Chad
TUA – TUZ	Ivory Coast
TVA – TXZ	France
TYA – TYZ	Benin
TZA – TZZ	Mali
T2A – T2Z	Tuvalu
T3A – T3Z	Kiribati
T4A – T4Z	Cuba
T5A – T5Z	Somali
T6A – T6Z	Afghanistan
T7A – T7Z	
T8A – T8Z	
T9A – T9Z	
UAA – UQZ	Russia
URA – UTZ	Ukraine
UUA – UZZ	Russia
U2A – U9Z	
VAA – VGZ	CANADA (Canada's original block of call signs)
VHA – VNZ	Australia
VOA – VOZ	CANADA (Newfoundland's original block of call signs)
VPA – VSZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
VTa – VWZ	India
VXA – VYZ	CANADA
VZA – VZZ	Australia
V2A – V2Z	Antigua
V3A – V3Z	Belize
V4A – V9Z	
WAA – WZZ	USA
XAA – XIZ	Mexico
XJA – XOZ	CANADA
XPA – XPZ	Denmark
XQA – XRZ	Chile
XTA – XTZ	Upper Volta
XUA – XUZ	Democratic Kampuchea
XVA – XVZ	Vietnam
XWA – XWZ	Laos
XXA – XXZ	Portugal
XYA – XZZ	Burma
X2A – X9Z	
YAA – YAZ	Afghanistan
YBA – YHZ	Indonesia
YIA – YIZ	Iraq
YJA – YJZ	New Hebrides
YKA – YKZ	Syria
YLA – YLZ	Latvia
YMA – YMZ	Turkey

YNA – YNZ	Nicaragua
YOA – YRZ	Romania
YSA – YSZ	El Salvador
YTA – YUZ	Yugoslavia
YVA – YYZ	Venezuela
YZA – YZZ	Yugoslavia
Y2A – Y9Z	Germany
ZAA – ZAZ	Albania
ZBA – ZJZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
ZKA – ZMZ	New Zealand
ZNA – ZOZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
ZPA – ZPZ	Paraguay
ZQA – ZQZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
ZRA – ZUZ	South Africa
ZVA – ZZZ	Brazil
Z2A – Z2Z	Zimbabwe
Z3A – Z9Z	
2AA – 2ZZ	Great Britain United Kingdom
3AA – 3AZ	Monaco
3BA – 3BZ	Mauritius
3CA – 3CZ	Equatorial Guinea
3DA – 3DM	Swaziland
3DN – 3DZ	Fiji
3EA – 3FZ	Panama
3GA – 3GZ	Chile
3HA – 3UZ	China
3VA – 3VZ	Tunisia
3WA – 3WZ	Vietnam
3XA – 3XZ	Guinea
3YA – 3YZ	Norway
3ZA – 3ZZ	Poland
4AA – 4CZ	Mexico
4DA – 4IZ	Philippines
4JA – 4LZ	Russia
4MA – 4MZ	Venezuela
4NA – 4OZ	Yugoslavia
4PA – 4SZ	Sri Lanka
4TA – 4TZ	Peru
4UA – 4UZ	United Nations Organization
4VA – 4VZ	Haiti
4WA – 4WZ	Yemen
4XA – 4XZ	Israel
4YA – 4YZ	International Civil Aviation Organization
4ZA – 4ZZ	Israel
5AA – 5AZ	Libya
5BA – 5BZ	Cyprus
5CA – 5GZ	Morocco
5HA – 5IZ	Tanzania
5JA – 5KZ	Colombia
5LA – 5MZ	Liberia
5NA – 5OZ	Nigeria
5PA – 5QZ	Denmark
5RA – 5SZ	Madagascar
5TA – 5TZ	Mauritania
5UA – 5UZ	Niger
5VA – 5VZ	Togo

5WA – 5WZ	Western Samoa
5XA – 5XZ	Uganda
5YA – 5ZZ	Kenya
6AA – 6BZ	Egypt
6CA – 6CZ	Syria
6DA – 6JZ	Mexico
6KA – 6NZ	Korea
6OA – 6OZ	Somali
6PA – 6SZ	Pakistan
6TA – 6UZ	Sudan
6VA – 6WZ	Senegal
6XA – 6XZ	Madagascar
6YA – 6YZ	Jamaica
6ZA – 6ZZ	Liberia
7AA – 7IZ	Indonesia
7JA – 7NZ	Japan
7OA – 7OZ	Yemen
7PA – 7PZ	Lesotho
7QA – 7QZ	Malawi
7RA – 7RZ	Algeria
7SA – 7SZ	Sweden
7TA – 7YZ	Algeria
7ZA – 7ZZ	Saudi Arabia
8AA – 8IZ	Indonesia
8JA – 8NZ	Japan
8OA – 8OZ	Botswana
8PA – 8PZ	Barbados
8QA – 8QZ	Maldives
8RA – 8RZ	Guyana
8SA – 8SZ	Sweden
8TA – 8YZ	India
8ZA – 8ZZ	Saudi Arabia
9AA – 9AZ	San Marino
9BA – 9DZ	Iran
9EA – 9FZ	Ethiopia
9GA – 9GZ	Ghana
9HA – 9HZ	Malta
9IA – 9JZ	Zambia
9KA – 9KZ	Kuwait
9LA – 9LZ	Sierra Leone
9MA – 9MZ	Malaysia
9NA – 9NZ	Nepal
9OA – 9TZ	Zaire
9UA – 9UZ	Burundi
9VA – 9VZ	Singapore
9WA – 9WZ	Malaysia
9XA – 9XZ	Rwanda
9YA – 9ZZ	Trinidad and Tobago

From the above list of international call signs it can be seen that the following twenty-four two-letter prefixes in any call sign would signify a Canadian call sign or station:

CF, CG, CH, CI, CJ, CK, CY, CZ, VA, VB, VC, VD, VE, VF, VG, VO, VX, VY, XJ, XK, XL, XM, XN and XO.

Therefore, going by the call sign system I was taught in radio school, three character; land or coast station, four character; ship station, and five character; aircraft station, would give Canada:

624 three-letter land or coast station call signs

Most of our aeradio stations had a digit after their three-letter call sign, and the Mounted Police stations had two digits after their three letter call sign, but these twenty-four prefixes were ample for our radiotelegraph land or coast station call signs. Since then the number of these stations, the majority radiotelephone for business grew to the point that some had three-letter three-digit call signs. This latter system made available 623,376 call signs.

16,224 four-letter ship station call signs

According to the List of Shipping for Canada 1979 there were 31,068 vessels of all types, sizes, and descriptions, registered in Canada. This did not include the vessels belonging to the Canadian Armed Forces. Well over half of these were not fitted with any type of radio. These figures were increasing annually since records were kept. These four-letter call signs were allotted many privately owned broadcast stations in Canada, which cut down the number available to ships. For many years Canada held the block from 3BA to 3FZ. This meant we had 3,380 additional four-character assignments and further proof that there was little reason for the six-character call sign. The block 3BA – 3FZ was returned to the International Telecommunication Union and was reassigned as can be seen from the above list. This meant the six-character call sign was feasible providing it was issued permanently, listed accurately in the International Telecommunication Union publications, and some realistic figure was used for the division between the four-letter and six-character call sign. Similar to the sixty-five foot length mentioned previously.

From my research Canada did not issue four-character ship call signs, which are so much easier to use, from the blocks CFAA to CFZZ, CHAA to CKZZ, VAAA to VBZZ, VEAA to VFZZ, XJAA to XOZZ or 3BAA to 3FZZ that is but one of many mysteries. The only exception was the City Class Patrol Frigates that entered service in the 1990's. They were issued calls from CHAA to CHAL and were soon changed to those as listed here. This must have been a screw up of some description and why those ships assigned a previous ship's name were not assigned the previous ship's call sign is another mystery.

Canada issued four-letter broadcast station call signs from these blocks. The majority if not all of the four-letter call signs from CFAA to CFZZ and CHAA to CIZZ are private broadcast stations. A couple of the Newfoundland broadcast stations had four-letter call signs with the prefix VO. These were assigned prior to Newfoundland joining Canada in 1949.

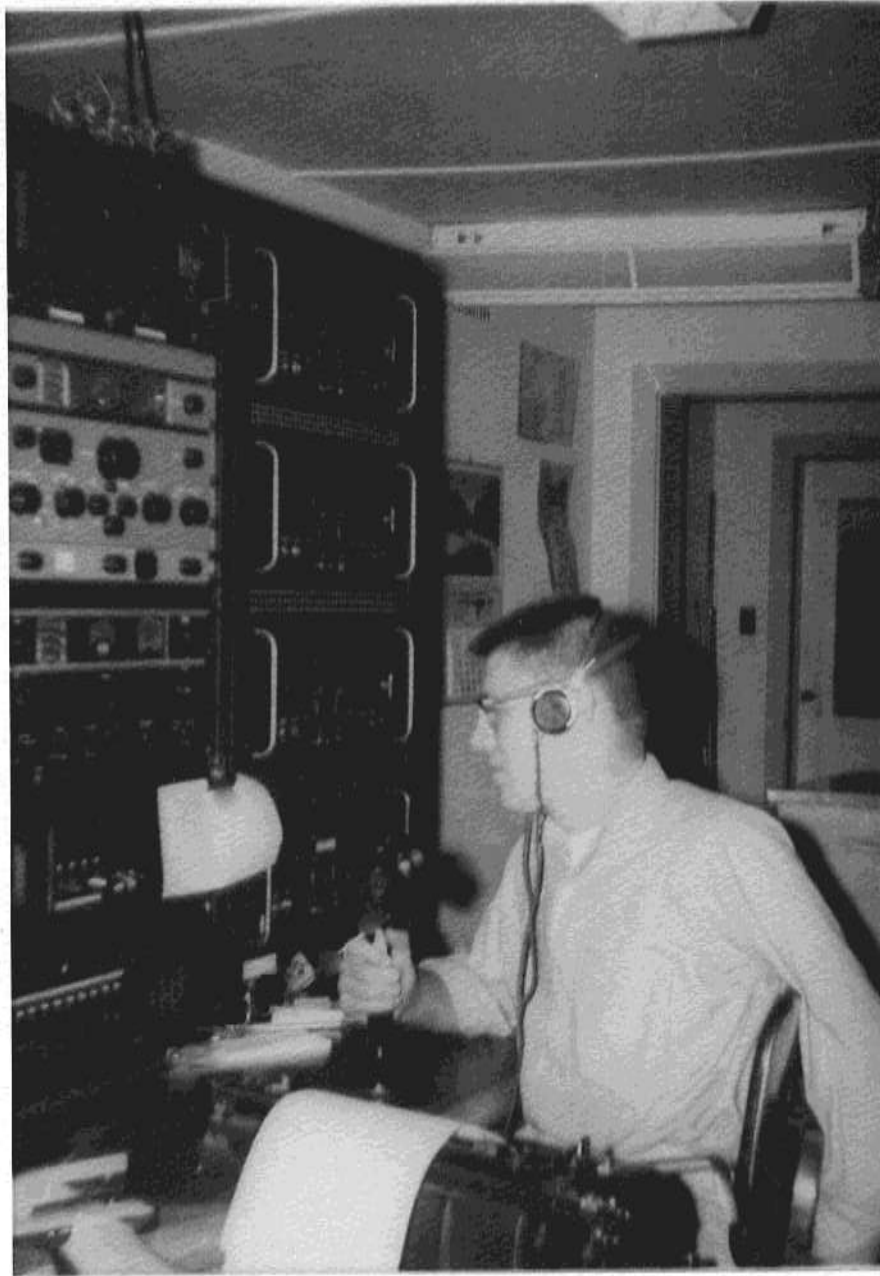
Canada issued four-letter land or ground station call signs with the VF prefix. For example Teslin Aeradio, Teslin Yukon Territory, had call sign VFT2 when I operated this station between 1963 and 1966. The Royal Canadian Air Force constructed and operated these stations along this air route during World War II turning them over to the Department of Transport about 1950. While the Air Force operated these stations they had four-letter call signs with the VF prefix. The station at Teslin had call sign VFFJ during the time the Air Force operated the station.

Canada issued three and four-letter call signs to the stations belonging to the government owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation from Chile's CBA to CBZ block of international call signs. For example the Halifax Radio Station belonging to this corporation had call sign CBH. The television station of this corporation at Halifax had call sign CBHT. The small stations of this corporation in the isolated areas of the country had these CB prefixes. The little forty-watt transmitter located in the village of Teslin, Yukon Territory, had call sign CBDK.

When the Canadian National Railroad operated broadcast stations back in the 1930's Canada assigned call signs to these stations with a CN prefix from Morocco's CNA – CNZ block of call signs.

All Canadian Airports were allotted four-letter identifications with the CY prefix that was used mainly as a message address. When it was used as an address it had two additional letters. These two additional letters indicated the office or organization at the airport. A simple and fast means of handling messages normally via high-speed computer operated Teletype equipment. These letters were used in many different ways. When the C prefix was omitted, using the Y as a prefix followed by the next two letters, these identifications were found in several places. The general public would find them in large letters on the baggage labels attached to their suitcases for the airport of destination. These three letters were used as the identification for the weather observations at each airport. This was the first group of the various observations on the meteorological Teletype traffic. These three letters were transmitted in Morse code as the identification for various pieces of navigational equipment, mainly the very high frequency omni-directional range (VOR) located at various airports across the country. The two letter suffix of these three letter identifications were transmitted via Morse code for identification from the main non-directional radio beacon (NDB) at most airports.

For example let's use CYHZAC and break it down. CYHZ was the Halifax International Airport. If it were CYZW it would indicate the Teslin Airport at Teslin, Yukon Territory. YHZ was the identification for the weather observation at the Halifax International Airport, the identification label found on your baggage if you were flying from Halifax, and was the Morse code identification heard when tuned to the Halifax International Airport VOR. HZ was the identification heard in Morse code when tuned to the Halifax International Airport NDB. AC was the identification for Air Canada. The four-letter prefix identifies the location of their office, in this case the one at the Halifax International Airport. If this identification or message address were CYXDPW it would break down to the Pacific Western Airlines office at the Edmonton Industrial Airport, Edmonton, Alberta. CYZWYF would break down to the Flight Service Station at the Teslin, Yukon Territory, airport and this was better known to us old timers by the former terminology – Aeradio Station. The VFT2 call sign at Teslin was the radiotelegraph or Morse code call sign for communications and the call sign for the radio communication portion of this station. All Canadian Aeradio Stations had similar call signs. Halifax Aeradio had call sign VFH5. The Halifax International Airport was renamed the Robert L. Stanfield Airport on February 9, 2007. The late Mr. Stanfield had been a long serving Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia and a leader of the opposition in the federal government of Canada.



Joan Roscoe

This is S. G. "Spud" Roscoe, VE8RM operating Teslin Aeradio VFT2 Teslin Yukon Territory in 1963. There was a large scratch down this old photograph but thanks to Sue Maskill, Peterborough, England she managed to remove it. The units in the rack on the right are VHF receivers. Some were made by Marconi and some by Collins. Yes, that is the microphone and yes, this is a Radio Range Station. This Radio Range Station was installed in 1942 but was the same as the first one that entered service in 1927. A few years after this photograph was taken in 1963 the Radio Range was removed and replaced with a Non-Directional Radio Beacon with the same ZW identification and on the same 269 kHz MF frequency. The toggle switches to the left of the message hanging on the hook are used to select the various transmitters. The message hanging on the hook is the current weather observations for the stations along the Alaska Highway. I am probably making one of the twice hourly weather broadcasts on the Radio Range. Note the two RCA AR88 receivers in the rack above the toggle switches. I am listening to the broadcast on the lower AR88 receiver via the headphones. To the left of this out of the photograph were the VHF and UHF

transmitters and the two UHF receivers. There were speakers for each receiver across the tops of these 6 foot 4 inch racks. Each speaker was probably 6 inches in diameter and there were two speakers in the top of each rack on their own 19 inch standard rack panel for same.

The following description of an Aeradio Station using Teslin as an example along with a DVD of our old 8-mm home movies taken while at Teslin gave me an Honorary Life Membership in the Yukon Historical Society in 2005.

The Canadian Aeradio Station

By Spurgeon G. "Spud" Roscoe VE1BC

The Canadian Aeradio Station was spread out over three sites or locations. One was the main operations room, one was the navigational aid transmitter site and the other was the communications transmitter site. Occasionally **the operations site** was simply a one-story building similar to a small house. This is where the radio operator on duty operated the station. The more common location of the operations site was at the local airport. The **navigational aid transmitter site** was a small building a few miles from the operations site that housed either a Radio Range Transmitter or a Non-directional Beacon Transmitter. The more common was the Radio Range Transmitter. The **communications transmitter site** was another small building a few miles from the operations site that housed a low frequency radiotelegraph transmitter. A few stations had high frequency radiotelephone transmitters that permitted communication with aircraft fitted with this equipment that began to appear in the 1950's. These transmitters had to be a few miles from the operations site because they would create so much interference with the rest of the equipment in the operations position that it would be unusable. The operation of the transmitters was via regular telephone lines.

The Canadian Aeradio Station was assigned two means of identification. One was the radio call sign and the other was the station identifier. Both were assigned from the international blocks of call signs assigned to Canada from the International Telecommunication Union located in Switzerland. The station identifier was a four-letter group with the prefix CY. The two-letter suffix indicated the station in question. This meant there were 676 two-letter possibilities. There were less than two hundred Canadian Aeradio Stations. The radio call sign had the prefix VF. The majority of these call signs had a letter and figure suffix with a digit from 2 to 9 inclusive. The third letter was often the first letter in the name of the station.

For an example I will try and describe the Teslin Aeradio Station located at Teslin, Yukon Territory. The **operations position** of this station was located at the Teslin Airport. The **communications transmitter** was located in a small log building east of the station and south of the Alaska Highway. The **radio range** was located in another small log building east of the station and north of the Alaska Highway, a little farther east than the communications transmitter.

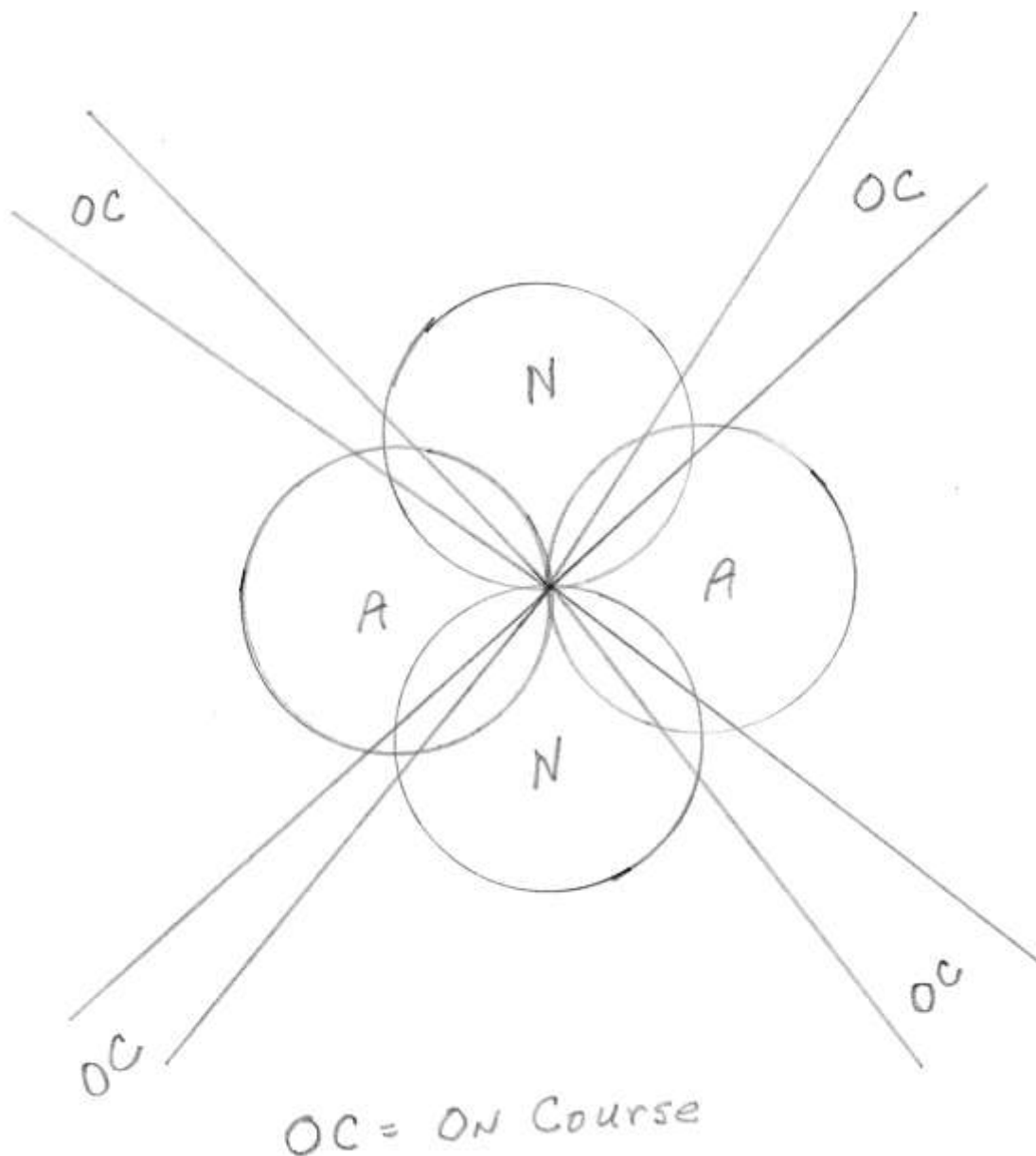
The four-letter identifier for this station was CYZW and the radio call sign was VFT2. The ZW was the prefix in all weather observations and the radio range keyed ZW in Morse code for identification. The duty operator identified the communications radiotelegraph transmitter by transmitting the call sign VFT2 every time he used it and while using it.

The communications transmitter had two steel towers that held its wire antenna. It operated on a low frequency down near the bottom end of the radio spectrum at 157 kilohertz. It had a good range and was easy to work Coppermine up on the Arctic Ocean. The East Coast sister stations used a frequency of 160 kilohertz in order to prevent interference. The landline Teletype replaced the communications transmitter at Teslin in the late 1950's. This was a Teletype that operated on telephone lines up and down the Alaska Highway into Edmonton. The communications transmitter was used as a backup in case the Teletype failed and was used in 1964 while the Teletype was converted to an automatic pickup.

The Radio Range was the first electronic navigational aid for aircraft and first entered service in 1927. These old ranges worked and worked well. Most of them lasted forty years or more.

The radio range transmitter at Teslin operated continuously on a frequency of 269 kilohertz and identified by keying ZW in Morse as stated, accomplished by a Bakelite wheel. The Morse code characters were engraved around the wheel's edge. This wheel was turned by a small electric motor and the Bakelite characters would push a contact up against another contact making and breaking the keying sequence. There were no electronic Morse keyers until the late 1960's.

A Radio Range Transmitter had five vertical steel antennas and this permitted a pattern that I have attempted to draw below.



A low-frequency radio range employed two pairs of antennas that radiated energy in a double figure-of-eight pattern, in the horizontal plane. The transmitter was alternately connected first to one and then to the other antenna system, being keyed with the Morse code A for one antenna and with N for the other. The

dots and dashes of these code signals were interlocked so that if a pilot was flying a course midway between the two maximum A and N signals, he received a steady signal known as the On Course signal. If he left the beam he then began to distinguish the A or the N, depending upon which side of the course he was now flying. In addition to the double pair, a center antenna transmitted an omni-directional signal at a frequency of 1,020 hertz removed from that of the A and N beams. Accordingly, the A and N indications were heard as a 1,020-hertz tone in the airplane.

On one side of the On Course or steady-tone region of a low-frequency range beam, the Morse code A would be distinguished, while on the other side of the On Course the N could just be heard. These regions were called the twilight zones. Aircraft used to keep to the right of the on course region traveling in either direction in order to avoid collision.

The signals from a low-frequency radio range were vertically polarized and were normally received at the aircraft on an antenna that responded best to vertical polarization. Reception of the radio range in a small region above the transmitting-antenna system was poor, resulting in the phenomenon known as the cone of silence, in which the signal was either extremely weak or altogether absent, depending upon the transmitting antenna system and upon the gain control setting. When the aircraft flew through this cone of silence the pilot knew he was directly over the transmitting antenna system.

By adjusting the radio range transmitter antenna system one could point the on course signals in various directions. The south on course signal of the Teslin radio range pointed down into British Columbia. The east on course signal of the Teslin radio range pointed towards Watson Lake and the west signal pointed to Whitehorse. The air route formed from these two legs formed the air route known as Red Five.

The air route that went up the Alaska Highway and in to Alaska was known as Amber Two. The west on course signal from Watson Lake pointed to Whitehorse and the Whitehorse east on course signal pointed to Watson Lake. This was part of air route amber two. Where the north on course signal of the Teslin radio range crossed these on course signals from Watson Lake and Whitehorse was known as the Fish Lake intersection. This was identified as 3A for recording purposes.

The operations room of the Teslin Aeradio Station was a room on the east end of a long operations log building that was just west of the present operations building. The duty operator recorded a weather observation every hour on the hour and every time the weather changed sufficiently to warrant a special weather observation. The operator broadcasted this weather twice every hour at 22 minutes and 52 minutes past each hour over the radio range transmitter.

An aircraft required nothing but a radio receiver capable of hearing a radio range in order to navigate by a radio range. For many years an aircraft carried this radio range receiver and one transmitter that transmitted radiotelephone on frequency 3023.5 kilohertz. In other words, a pilot could call any radio range station simply by listening to the radio range and transmitting on his only transmitter. This transmitter was audio modulated on 3023.5 kilohertz. All of the nearly 8,000 aircraft that flew up the Alaska Highway to Russia during World War II were using this system. These were the aircraft given to Russia by the United States under the lend-lease terms.

The operations room monitored 3023.5 kilohertz continually. The operations room also had one or two receivers for monitoring. Each and every aeradio station monitored their adjacent stations to make sure their radio range was operating properly and that each operator made his weather broadcast at his scheduled time. The Teslin duty operator not only monitored Whitehorse and Watson Lake, he broadcasted their weather observation. Teslin started his broadcast with the correct Greenwich Mean Time and then the Teslin, Whitehorse, Watson Lake and Teslin again weather. He signed off the broadcast with the statement "Keep alert watch for other aircraft". One wonders if that did any good.

During the early 1950's the very high frequency audio modulated radiotelephone began to be fitted in aircraft. The Canadian Aeradio Station was fitted accordingly. The Teslin aeradio station monitored three of these frequencies continuously. 121.5 megahertz the distress frequency, 126.7 megahertz, the instrument

flight rules communication frequency and 122.2 megahertz, the visual flight rules communication frequency.

During the late 1950's military aircraft were fitted with ultra high frequency audio modulated radiotelephone equipment. A few of the aeradio stations were fitted with this equipment for communication with these aircraft. This consisted of two frequencies. 243.0 megahertz, the distress frequency, and one working frequency for communications, but I no longer remember the Teslin frequency for this communication. Teslin communicated with the military aircraft going in and out of Alaska and also communicated with the U2 spy planes flying over Russia back in the 1960's.

The very high frequency transmitters and ultra high frequency transmitters were mounted in the same equipment racks as their corresponding receivers at the operations position. At these high frequencies they did not interfere with the other equipment in use. Teslin continued to monitor 3023.5 kilohertz up in to the late 1960's.

The radio range transmitter at Teslin had an emergency generator that would run the radio range in the event of a power failure. This was the only emergency generator at the station. Teslin operated on electricity from Yukon electric and their diesel power generating plant located in the village of Teslin. This power was so accurate that an electric clock kept perfect time.

During the 1950's the automatic radio direction finder began to replace the radio range receiver in aircraft. The automatic radio direction finder would simply point to any radio transmitter it was tuned. The aircraft pilot would tune this direction finder to any radio station he was flying towards. When the aircraft flew over the radio transmitter the compass needle on the direction finder would swing 180 degrees and point back to the transmitter. This of course told the pilot he had gone over the transmitter and he could then tune in the next radio transmission he was heading towards. These units worked well on the regular AM broadcast transmitters so needless to say when something like an interesting ball game was being transmitted, that is where the pilots listened.

By the mid 1960's the automatic direction finder was so popular that the radio ranges were being converted to a non-directional beacon. The non-directional beacon simply transmitted a steady tone, identified by the same Morse code keying as the radio range and on the same low frequency. The non-directional beacon used one antenna, an antenna identical to the five radio range antennas. The radio range at Teslin was replaced with a non-directional beacon and this was moved up on the airport a few hundred feet northwest of the operations building.

The Canadian Aeradio Station also monitored an open telephone line on an ordinary loudspeaker. This line provided communications with all the aeradio stations in the area and with the nearest air traffic control. At Teslin the duty operator was in communication with all the stations along the Alaska Highway from Northway, Alaska down to and including the Edmonton Air Traffic Control Centre. This communications link was known as Sked F.

The Canadian Aeradio Station required a minimum staff of five. One was the officer in charge who did the paper work and could fill in when necessary. One was the senior operator who was a regular radio operator but could fill in for the officer in charge. And three radio operators. It required four radio operators to operate the station twenty-four hours each and every day. One was on day shift (8am to 4pm), one on evening shift (4pm to midnight), one on night shift (midnight to 8am), and one on day off. The stations that had more aircraft movements in their area would often require two operators on the day and evening shift.

I hope this brief description is not only of interest but helps one understand the operation of these stations.



Thanks to Jacques d'Avignon VE3VIA for finding this photo

This is an aerial view of the Radio Range Site at Kuujjuak, Northern Quebec via Google. It is probably the last Radio Range Site left in Canada and it was probably easier to leave it as is rather than take it down and ship it out. At least when it changed to a non-directional beacon (NDB) it provided four spare antennas. Kuujjuak was known as Fort Chimo until a few years ago. Kuujjuak in the first nation native language is "Great River". Jerry Proc, VE3FAB, has an excellent description of the naval station at this location on his web site.

Back in the "Good Old Days" when all communications to the outside world was in radiotelegraph on 160 kilocycles, Fort Chimo was assigned international call sign VFF4. This radio circuit was known as the "point to point" or "pint to pint" depending on what coast you came from. The only exception to this was when the military was stationed at Fort Chimo. The U.S. military was stationed there during World War II and the Royal Canadian Navy for a short while during the 1950's. They both had their own radiotelegraph circuits to the outside. In 1988 Kuujjuak is listed with an NDB on 390 kiloHertz that appears to be at this site. This NDB identified in Morse with the letters VP, making CYVP the four letter identification for this station.

Canada has probably assigned four-letter international call signs to a number of stations that I am not aware of but one further example was the stations operated by the Hudson Bay Company in the Arctic. Actually these stations had a four-character call sign with an international prefix and not a four-letter call sign. For many years each manager of the various Hudson Bay Company trading posts throughout the country was issued a ten-watt fix-tuned radiotelegraph transceiver along with a list of the various characters in Morse code, the continental code. It was each manager's responsibility to learn the code and the operation of these units, likely a welcome diversion for many from the boredom associated with the various isolated posts. Right after World War II the Hudson Bay Company post at Cambridge Bay, North West Territories had call sign CY5D. The manager at this post, "Scottie" Gaul, mastered the operation of this unit but it was his wife who took the bull by the horns so to speak and became very proficient with this unit. Radiotelephone has replaced these stations and I have seen their location, including call sign and frequency, printed on various navigational charts in case some station, ship, aircraft, etc., wanted to communicate with them.

There were quite a few of these two letter, one digit and one letter call signs assigned back then. These are some of the ones I found listed for 1937. They all were listed as using CW so there must have been a lot of work for one who could operate CW back then.

- CZ2R Pilotage Authority, New Westminster, British Columbia
- CZ3C Wings Limited, Norway House, Manitoba
- CZ3K General Dredging, Neuville, Quebec
- CZ3R Canadian Pacific Railways, New Liskeard, Ontario

CZ3Y Northern Broadcasting, North Bay, Ontario
 CZ4O Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Mount Collins, Ontario
 CZ4P Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Nestors Falls, Ontario
 CZ4Q Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, North Bay, Ontario
 CZ5K Dominion Skyways, Montreal
 CZ5L Dominion Skyways, Mud Lake, Quebec

From this research and years of experience I am convinced that the majority of the Canadian ships should have had a four-letter call sign allotted permanently and listed correctly in the International Telecommunication Union publications. The assignment of these ship call signs to ships with a prefix indicating the owner of the ship, as they were over the years led to a lot of unnecessary confusion and foolishness.

Since these four-letter call signs sometimes spell a word they had a tendency to leave us operators with something to remember. For example, the French warship LA CHARENTE cruised around for years with FART. The Swedish vessel SOFIE often carried a girl radio officer and had call sign SLUT. GOOF was a regular customer of station VCS and was assigned to the DART ATLANTIC. DART ATLANTIC became CP AMBASSADOR and retained the GOOF call sign. Every four-letter word except the ones with the letter Q for a prefix could be a ship's call sign. The first or first two letters of the prefix would indicate the ship's nationality from the above list. But as can be seen from Canada's twenty-four prefixes there was little to be created, and nothing exciting unless something like CITY or VERY turn you on. CITY is a broadcast call sign in Edmonton, Alberta. Canada made it a tradition to assign the CH prefix to private broadcast stations, which is the reason CHUM is in Toronto. There is no reason why two Canadian ships could not have a CHIT and CHAT. One could very well be CHIP, and I always felt XMAS should have been assigned to the CHRISTMAS SEAL. Possibly the powers that be were saving XOXO or XOOX for our first "Love Boat", and VOLT might give someone a charge in the proper area. That is about it.

421,824 five-letter aircraft station call signs.

Most civil aircraft throughout the world were assigned a registration with a prefix from the above international list of call signs. This registration is painted on the aircraft and used as the radiotelephone call sign. Canadian civil aircraft had the prefix CF- followed by three letters from CF-AAA to CF-ZZZ. Many of these registration call sign assignments were issued so that the registration indicated the owner of the aircraft. Canadian aircraft used these registrations as the radiotelegraph call sign for those aircraft that were fitted with radiotelegraph, and most from CF-MPA to CF-MPZ were the Mounted Police aircraft, the majority of the block from CF-PWA to CF-PWZ were the Pacific Western aircraft, and so on. The number of aircraft registered in Canada exceeded the CF- prefix so this was changed by the position of the dash. They became C-F, C-G, C-H and C-I. The second letter is one that indicates a Canadian prefix. This meant that the powers that be could assign these registrations so they will describe the type of aircraft. C-F and C-G apparently are the old standard aircraft types. C-I the ultra-light aircraft and C-H are hovercraft. I do not agree with it and feel the dash should have been left where it was. C is a prefix for thirteen countries and one international organization. It is not a Canadian prefix and does not become a Canadian prefix until the second letter is included – therefore the dash should have remained where it was. All this did is make the Canadian prefix resemble the European prefix for the nations that hold complete blocks of calls that make the first letter indicate the country of registry. These are G-AAAA to G-ZZZZ United Kingdom, F-AAAA to F-ZZZZ France, I-AAAA to I-ZZZZ Italy, and so on. All military aircraft in Canada used the prefix VC followed by four digits as the radiotelegraph call sign. The radiotelephone call sign was a word that pertained to the squadron the aircraft was assigned followed by the last two digits of the aircraft's number. For example, I remember one that used WILDCAT 44 when it was on patrol with the navy frigate I was in at the time years ago. During the last days of the VCS station I remember these military aircraft as using MILITARY and the complete aircraft number. The military aircraft do not use the international block as a prefix for their aircraft so Canada will not likely ever come near to the maximum of 421,824 possibilities in this area.

AMATEUR AND EXPERIMENTAL RADIO CALL SIGNS

The amateur and experimental operators of 1912 and before used their initials or some self assigned means of identification. The amateur and commercial operators were more or less QRM (man made interference) for each other during that time. The primitive nature of the equipment in use by both the amateur and commercial operator meant that the frequency in use at any time by either operator was more or less all the frequencies then known. The majority of these early stations transmitted on a wide band of frequencies, which was a large portion of that area known as 100 kilohertz in modern terminology. When an amateur operator interfered with a commercial operator he was to terminate when the commercial operator transmitted the signal STP and was not to commence until the commercial operator transmitted CANCEL STP.

The earliest regulations for Canadian amateur radio stations, that of 1913, state that the call sign shall have X as the prefix followed by a two letter suffix, AA, AB, etc. X has always been a fascinating letter to signify the unknown and the experimental. The first call signs of the Wireless Association of Ontario were three letters with the prefix X. The two-letter suffix commenced with the first letter of the operator's surname. For example, my call sign would have been XRA had this been the first call sign allotted to someone with R as the first letter of the surname. The last letter of the call sign was assigned in alphabetical order as various people with the same first letter in their surname applied for call signs.

About 1920 amateur radio had received prominence on an international level after much work from various people. At this time Canadian amateur radio call signs were divided up with a numerical prefix and two-letter suffix. A three character call sign still, but the numerical prefix was allotted as follow:

1	Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island
2	Quebec
3	Ontario
4	Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
5	British Columbia, North West Territories and Yukon Territory
6	Training Schools
9	Experimental
10	Amateur Broadcasting

Shortly after this arrangement went in service the amateur operators started to reach other amateurs outside their own geographical areas, mainly because they found that the frequencies above the area of about 1,000 kilohertz in modern terminology were of some use. This presented a problem because the amateur operators of the other areas of the world were using an identical call sign. This meant that there was no international identification and no way to know the location of the station heard. When the Canadian amateur stations started to communicate with the American stations this problem was solved. The Canadian stations added the prefix C to their call sign and the American stations added the prefix U to their call sign. It was not long before these stations were reaching across the Atlantic Ocean. When this took place the letter N was added to the prefix of the call sign. The letter N signified that the station was located on the North American continent. Had I held my call sign at this time it would have been NC1BC. My amateur radio call sign, VE1BC, has the suffix BC.

On February 1st, 1927, at 0000 GMT European countries were to have a two-letter prefix. The first letter was the letter E; Asian countries, similarly, with the letter A; North America N; South America S; and Africa F. This was according to the International Amateur Radio Union News in the American Radio Relay League's publication QST for January 1927.

In 1929 amateur radio call signs were assigned an international prefix from the country's block of international call signs for the country the amateur station was licensed. VE became the prefix for these call signs in Canada. VE is a radio abbreviation meaning UNDERSTOOD. Because so many have been able to understand radio from the ranks of the amateur operators, this was an excellent choice for the prefix of these call signs.

After 1946 the Canadian amateur call signs had a prefix as follow:

VE1	New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island
VE2	Quebec
VE3	Ontario
VE4	Manitoba
VE5	Saskatchewan
VE6	Alberta
VE7	British Columbia
VE8	Yukon and North West Territories
VE9	Experimental
VE0	amateur station in a Canadian ship – after 1954

When Newfoundland joined the Dominion of Canada in 1949 their VOA-VOZ block of international call signs became part of the Canadian international block of call signs, and this included their amateur radio stations:

VO1	Newfoundland
VO2	Labrador

The Yukon Territory was assigned the VY1 prefix for their amateur radio call signs in 1977. Prince Edward Island was assigned the VY2 prefix and the VE9 experimental prefix was terminated and this prefix became the amateur radio call sign prefix of New Brunswick. This all took place in the early 1990's and unfortunately no official date was recorded for these changes. These provincial and territorial governments are simply cesspools of greed and discrimination and serve no useful purpose but for some unknown reason we have to be blessed with them. Canada would be so much better with federal and municipal government only. On April 1st, 1999, Canada formed another of these known as the territory of Nunavut and their amateur radio stations were changed from VE8 to the prefix VY0 at that time.

About 1995 Canada began to issue amateur radio call signs with the VA prefix. These are the same as the VE prefix. There were so many VE3 amateur radio stations that this was done in order to obtain more amateur radio call signs and this has spread to the other VE areas. At the same time it became possible for a Canadian amateur to keep his or her call sign when they moved from one area in the country to another. One could find a VE1 operating permanently in the VE7 area, and so on around the country.

The VE0 prefix was first assigned in 1954. The first vessel assigned this call sign was HMCS IROQUOIS with call sign VE0NA. This was our first IROQUOIS, the tribal class destroyer built during World War II. She had two pendant numbers during her twenty-year career, G89 during the war and 217 after 1946. The pendant number was the number painted on her hull. At the end of the war she had international call sign CZJD. She used a two letter coded call sign in radiotelegraph during the war that was changed every couple of months. Her international call sign during the war was CZGD. In 1946 she was assigned call sign CZGC and this was changed again to her original and final call sign CZGD in 1951, and around that time she was assigned radiotelephone call code "Jack Stone".

Getting back to the amateur call sign, the naval ship received the prefix VE0N and the merchant ship received the prefix VE0M and they each had the one suffix making a five-character call sign. The amateur radio community calls this a two letter call sign. There were so few VE0 call signs it is hard to believe the powers that be managed to screw them up, but screw them up they did. They assigned the same call sign to two different ships. From this incident the powers that be came out with new call signs for these stations. Rather than use the top half of the VE0 block for the East Coast, and the latter half for the West Coast, they came out with a six character call sign. VE0NEA through to VE0NEZ was assigned to East Coast naval ships and VE0NWA through to VE0NWZ to West Coast naval ships. Apparently merchant ships were broken up in a similar fashion but I have never learned the exact division. What difference would it make because there were more errors in these assignments after this move than before? Some yachts were running around the East Coast with a VE0NE prefix that should have been VE0M. One would be correct in assuming this a mystery in that they received an amateur call sign for these stations, and not a three-letter

three-digit land station call sign. Just before Canada went to the additional VA prefix with these amateur call signs, these VE0 call signs began to appear with any two-letter suffix from AA to ZZ.

Canada was one of the few countries, if not the only one that not only issued a distinctive prefix for amateur radio stations fitted in ships, but permitted licensed commercial operators to operate these stations with their commercial licence. The former item is one of personal opinion and I have never quite understood the reason for this although most of my amateur operating was in this area via these stations. The latter idea I find a good one. I had operated club stations in the Navy, but had not had an amateur operator's licence and had to get one in order to record an example of one on these pages. Amateurs of most anything seem to have the better or more efficient participants in anything, be it radio, mechanics, gardening, or whatever. This certainly applies to radio. The best radiotelegraph to be heard over the air was found on the amateur radio bands, and the few Canadian commercial operators who participated in this naturally gained a lot from those excursions. It was the practice and became tradition to assign the amateur stations the unknown in radio and once they improved, made a use of this area, or whatever the proper terminology, took it over for commercial use.

 Government of Canada Department of Communications	 Gouvernement du Canada Ministère des Communications
Certificate of Proficiency in Radio	Certificat de Compétence en Radio
Advanced Amateur	Certificat supérieur d'amateur
This is to Certify that SPURGEON GEORGE ROSCOE	Le présent certificat atteste que
has been examined in accordance with the General Radio Regulations issued under the Radio Act and has qualified in:	a subi un examen conformément au Règlement général sur la radio, édicté en vertu de la Loi sur la radio, et qu'il a réussi dans les sujets suivants:
(a) The adjustment, operation and care of radiotelephone apparatus and associated measuring equipment;	a) Réglage, utilisation et entretien des appareils radiotéléphoniques et du matériel de mesure connexe;
(b) Transmitting and sound routing in the International Morse Code at a speed of not less than fifteen words a minute;	b) Transmission et lecture au son en code international Morse à une vitesse d'au moins quinze mots par minute;
(c) Detailed knowledge of Canadian and international regulations governing the operation of Amateur Experimental Stations with unrestricted operational privileges;	c) Connaissance approfondie des règlements canadiens et internationaux régissant l'exploitation des stations expérimentales d'amateur jouissant de privilèges d'exploitation illimités;
(d) The operation of an Amateur Experimental Station for at least twelve months.	d) Utilisation d'une station expérimentale d'amateur pendant au moins douze mois.
<i>It is also certified that the holder of this Certificate is qualified to operate any licensed Amateur Experimental Station in accordance with the terms of the station licence.</i>	<i>Il est également attesté que le titulaire de ce certificat a qualité pour faire fonctionner toute station expérimentale d'amateur, suivant les conditions stipulées dans la licence.</i>
GRANTED BY THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE RADIO ACT	DÉLIVRÉ PAR LE MINISTRE DES COMMUNICATIONS EN VERTU DES DISPOSITIONS DE LA LOI SUR LA RADIO
 Examining Officer / Examinateur February 20, 1980 Date:	 per Minister of Communications / pour le ministre des Communications

I do not agree with our present system of Amateur Radio Call Signs in Canada, and will never agree with them. The reason for this is that I have been very fortunate to either visit or have lived in nearly all areas of this vast country. I have made many friends from one end of the country to the other, and they come from every walk of life that makes up the rather small population of this vast country. I have never been able to understand why we have not been able to conduct ourselves in terms of Canada and Canadian more than we do. For some reason these terms have been placed on a level somewhere above us, and we concentrate more on the regional terms of the provinces. This I feel is a serious fault. For example, the Nova Scotia flag originated in 1621. When this province became part of the Dominion of Canada, I believe this flag and

everything distinctly provincial should have been shoved so far back in the closet that anyone finding same today should have to take it to some expert for identification. We are not the United Provinces of America, but because the areas of this country had the same beginnings, more or less, as the United States of America we operate more on these lines. Therefore, I do not understand or have any use for these Provincial Flags and Provincial Licence Plates on our motor vehicles. We should have the one flag only, the Canadian flag, we should have the one licence plate only, the Canadian Licence Plate on our motor vehicles, and there should be no way of distinguishing a vehicle from any area within the country by these plates. This would make it so much easier for all concerned, we the operators, the policing, the construction, and so on, if they came under the one, the Canadian Department of Highways, or whatever label it was given. This is the reason I feel our Amateur Radio Call Signs should be Canada and Canadian only.

I am convinced that the present provincial and territorial governments are little more than cesspools of greed and discrimination. If Canada went to a system of federal and municipal governments only the majority would probably demand regional identification in some form. Therefore, make the motor vehicle licence plates Canada with the federal district on them. Assign regional numbers to the plates and make them different colours, but make them Canada and Canadian only. Probably each federal district would want its own flag as well and this should help put an end to these provincial and territorial flags. Assign each present flag to a federal district and let the remainder of the federal districts create their own flag. There would be so many French federal districts within the present Quebec that this would solve any separation problem. This would also make it possible to have a few French federal districts outside the present area of Quebec. I am convinced that Canada would be a much better country if this huge change were made. It would spread the wealth around, make the health care the same, the schools the same, and give us better leadership when the good members of the provincial and territorial governments became part of the federal government. If an election were held at a certain time every five years it would make it so much better. Everyone would know and be able to prepare for the next election. The Prime Minister of Canada should be permitted one five-year term only, if for no other reason it gets awful tiresome looking at the same face and listening to the same voice. This is the Canada I would like to live in and not have to get tangled up in these foolish provincial and territorial political fences.

When you take the twenty-four international call sign prefixes available to Canada and place the digit from one through to zero after each, this will then make 240 prefixes available for these amateur call signs. Amateur operators refer to their call signs as a two or three letter call sign, using the number of letters making up the suffix of the call sign. Once they have met the requirements for this change, many of these amateurs exchange their three letter call signs for a two letter call sign, providing a two letter call sign is available. When you consider the 240 prefix possibilities and add to this the 676 two letter suffix possibilities, you then have available 162,240 call signs – more than Canada will ever need. Therefore, every amateur operator in this country could have a two letter call sign, as they call it, and these could quite easily be changed in a matter of minutes. They should signify nothing more than Canada and Canadian, and no matter where the operator went within the country he would retain the same call sign. This would mean quite a change for many of these operators, and not likely many would agree with me. The present holders of two letter call signs would retain these, but anyone could have any possible call sign that was not assigned no matter where he lived within the country. From the call sign there would be no way of knowing the location of any station within the country and this would help in getting us to realize we are Canada and Canadian before and above anything else. The call signs would be CF1AA through to XO0ZZ, missing the various two letter prefixes that are not part of Canada's international block of call signs. Chosen randomly, possibly via a draw or similar means, VE3HAA through to VE3HZZ could become VG6AA through to VG6ZZ, if the VE3H prefix were to become VG6 for the initial change. Also if VG5AA through to VG5ZZ were to replace VE7CAA through to VE7CZZ, and if VG7AA through to VG7ZZ were to replace VE1BAA through to VE1BZZ, the initial change would spread the prefixes around the country.

An award for working all 240 Canadian prefixes would be quite a challenge. The present rules whereby various international amateur radio organizations refer to several of the islands around this country as separate countries could remain in effect. For example, if XN2JJ lived on Sable Island, this could be made known for that reason. The big advantage would be that it would get the majority to refer to us more in

terms of Canada and Canadian. And our birth certificates, trade papers, etc., should all read Canada and Canadian as well.

This is all wishful thinking on my part. There is no hope of this taking place and if it did there would be those within the amateur radio community that would insist on a certain prefix for each federal district. There are 310 federal districts and only 240 prefixes and the solution to this alone would be rather interesting to say the least.

MORE ON EQUIPMENT

I received this list of frequencies monitored by Canadian Stations in April 2007:

The following coast stations manned by the Canadian Coast Guard monitor all monitor 2182khz on a 24/7 basis as well as these other freqs:

VAE Tofino - 2054khz / 4125khz

VAJ Prince Rupert - 2054khz / 4125khz

VAR Saint John

VBA Thunder Bay* - CH407 (*for Hudson Bay)

VCG Rivière-au-Renard

VCM St. Anthony

VCO Sydney

VCP Placentia

VCS Halifax

VFA Inuvik - CH403 / 5803khz / 6218.6khz / CH601 / CH826 / CH1214

VFF Iqaluit* - CH403 / CH603 / CH605 / CH812 / CH825 / CH1201 / All HF-DSC freqs from 4-16mhz - HF RT, NBDP, DSC (* open from mid-June to late November)

VOJ Port aux Basques

VOK Labrador CH407 / CH605

VON St. John's

note - we also have other RT broadcast & dedicated coast guard freqs that are not listed above as well as RAFAX freqs

As for how important is HF DSC to the GMDSS, well, since Inmarsat doesn't reliably cover anything above 75N or 76N, it is very important for comms in the Canadian Arctic.

Mr. Jean Guèvremont

Canadian Coast Guard
Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS)

There will never be a termination to the field of improvements in communications, so there is no way I can record anything accurate on the future. This exercise goes back twelve generations. Looking ahead twelve generations should see many fantastic changes in the field of communications, providing this old world survives another twelve generations of our foolishness. Comparing the past with the future should help provide some insight. One thing is rather obvious, since the French language survived for roughly eight generations in a totally alien environment in the state of Louisiana, it should be clear that there will still be many languages twelve generations into the future. This should present little trouble, and not likely the percentage of the population that can use more than the one language will be as great as it is today. By that time everyone should have a small wrist sized unit capable of communicating with any other person. They should be able to communicate with each other no matter where they are or who they are. No matter what language these units receive they will automatically translate this language to the operators' choice. We are nearly to the point of making these units available now, and the amount of change that electronics will make for future generations is beyond our imagination.

I wanted to learn what I could of this trade and pass along some of this information because so few seem to know anything about the subject. This is a fascinating subject and the little I have tried to record here only scratches the surface. From this it is rather obvious that the present is not far removed from the past.

Briefly, the equipment that should have been fitted in the last ships to use radiotelegraph:

Radio Transmitters:

The main transmitter fitted in the last ship's radio room was capable of being used on all medium and high frequencies of the marine radio bands. They normally were capable of power outputs of 500 watts on the medium frequencies and around 1500 watts on the high frequencies. They could be set to any frequency within the bands down to 100 cycles for each high frequency segment. For example they were calibrated to one decimal point beyond the actual frequency in kilohertz. Rather than 6292 kHz, they could be adjusted to ten decimal points from 6292.0 through to 6292.9 kHz. They were capable of transmitting most anything imaginable from radiotelegraph, double side band (a form of audio modulation), single side band (upper and lower – full, reduced, and suppressed carriers), radio Teletype, and radio facsimile.

Emergency Radio Transmitters fitted in the last ship's radio room:

These units transmitted both radiotelegraph and modulated-radiotelegraph on the medium frequencies of 500 kHz and all the normal working frequencies for this band. In addition they were equipped with a microphone and capable of transmitting on the calling and distress frequency of 2182 kHz in radiotelephone.

Receivers:

Both the main and emergency receivers covered the entire radio spectrum from the very low frequencies to the top end of the high frequency bands. The emergency receiver was normally a cheaper version of the main, both in operation and price.

Patch Panels:

Most stations were fitted with a patching panel whereby the main receiver and transmitter could be remotely operated from a number of stations and on a duplex or voice operated control system. For example the Captain could have and operate a remote unit from his office in the ship. Rarely was the communication on these units the best, possibly from poor adjustment of the various pieces of equipment controlling the remote units.

Automatic Keys and Automatic Alarm Receivers:

These units operated much the same as they had for years, except they were solid-state transistor units. This made them much smaller in size with little or no adjustment other than a few switches to activate their operation, far superior to the old "Seaguard" Auto Alarm manufactured by Marconi where you wore your fingers off trying to get the synchronized motor started. The Auto Keys were keyed electronically and not mechanically as they were for many years. Many of those older units were still to be found in the older radio rooms afloat on termination of the radio officer.

The automatic keys could be set for two distinct transmissions. They would transmit twelve four-second dashes in one minute. The space or pause between each dash was one second. This was known as the automatic alarm signal. This signal was the reason all proper radio room clocks had red lines representing the dashes of this signal around the outside edge of the clock face. An operator could send this signal by hand simply by sending a steady signal while the second hand of the clock was passing each of those red lines. All automatic alarm signals were transmitted by hand at the VCS station until the construction of the last station in the winter of 1987 – 1988.

The automatic alarm receiver would activate on the reception of three of those correctly spaced dashes. The transmission of four times this number provided further assurance that this transmission would be received. When the automatic alarm receiver was activated it would ring a bell on the ship's bridge alerting the officer of the watch, a bell in the radio room, and a bell next to the radio officer's bunk.

The second transmission provided by the automatic key was the distress signal and these units automatically sent SOS three times, DE, then the ship's call sign three times followed by one ten second dash at sixteen words per minute radiotelegraph. These automatic keys would repeat this distress signal every twelve minutes automatically until destroyed or switched off. The ten-second dash was transmitted for the use of radio direction finders.

Radio Direction Finders:

The only reason these units were fitted was that they were required by law in order to assist in any distress communications. They were seldom used and often had not been calibrated in years towards the end of the radio officer. The units fitted towards the end of the radio officer were fully automatic and showed both the relative bearing to the ship's head and the true bearing as soon as a signal was heard. I felt those units should have been returned to their proper place in the radio room. They were always fitted in the radio room until the last two or three decades of the radio officer. They were seldom used in the chart room and would have made an excellent watch-keeping receiver. Not only that if I were sailing so fitted I would often take bearings from the navigational radio beacons and compare those with the watch keeping officers position recorded hourly. One never knew when it would become useful for both distress and navigation, and this would ensure accuracy when needed.



Furuno U.S.A. Inc., South San Francisco, California

This is the Furuno Model FD-171 Radio Direction Finder. This unit could have been used as a Receiver, an Automatic Radio Direction Finder or a Manual Operated Radio Direction Finder. The Compass Rose to the left displayed both the true and relative bearings of the received signal. The digital unit top center displayed the frequency and the knob next to this selected one of five crystals or the manual tune position. The three knobs in a horizontal line below these are the dial lighting dimmer, the manual tuning knob and the band change switch. The four knobs in a horizontal line across the bottom of the unit are the beat frequency oscillator control, the volume control, the RF gain control and the off, receiver, automatic and manual selector control. This unit would have been a welcome asset even at a coast station.

Very High Frequency FM Radiotelephones:

There were less than a dozen channels available when this equipment was first fitted around 1970. When the radio officer position was terminated there were over one hundred channels in the area of 156 megahertz. These units normally put out around twenty-five watts on high power, around one watt on low power, and were fix-tuned to the various international channel assignments. They normally could electronically scan several assigned channels and were normally installed in the radio room with a remote unit to the bridge. This meant they were normally left to the bridge. Most Captains by this time had gotten used to the idea of the officer of the watch using the radiotelephones and this eliminated calling them out for the purpose of answering any calls. These units provided good clear communications for a distance of nearly sixty miles. Many in the nautical world called them a bridge to bridge intercom. Most ships also issued various officers' a portable unit commonly called a "walkie talkie" and the bridge would keep in contact with those units. This was a big asset especially when docking a vessel.

Facsimile:

Many ships were fitted with these units. They normally operated from a fix-tuned receiver but could operate just as well from a general coverage receiver. The output of the receiver was applied to electric contacts or pens that would burn a special paper on the reception of a signal. We used to keep this special paper in the galley refrigerator to keep it moist. This is a very basic or brief description. These facsimile receivers would reproduce any drawing made by the transmitter. Halifax Radio CFH provided this service in eastern Canada. These units mainly reproduced weather maps and in this area ice maps, from a number

of stations around the world. This gave the ship an up to date detailed weather description or ice detail in pictorial form.



Alden Electronics, Westborough, Massachusetts

This is the Alden Model 9312 Weather Chart recorder. This unit was the same size as a portable typewriter and weighed nine pounds. It could operate from either twelve volts or 115 volts and came with a built-in synthesized 100 kilohertz to 30-megahertz receiver. The five smallest tabs are used to set the frequency of the receiver. The recording paper cassette contained 35 feet of 11 inch wide paper. The weather chart, ice chart, or whatever was recorded, was printed on the paper with a stylus belt-scanning electrode. It was a most amazing small inexpensive and efficient navigational aid at the time. The chart seen in the photograph is a surface weather chart transmitted by Halifax Radio CFH.



Alden Electronics, Westborough, Massachusetts

This is the Alden 9519C Marine Radiofacsimile Recorder. This unit would record full size weather charts at sea from radio transmitters located throughout the world. This unit was using a Mackay step-tuned general coverage receiver. The operator has his left hand on the tabs that controlled the frequency setting of this receiver. Units such as this were very important for the navigation of the Canadian Coast Guard Icebreakers, especially while working with shipping in ice. I have seen the navigating officers in those icebreakers use the ice charts transmitted identical to the weather charts, as a navigational chart. They recorded our positions and course as though it were the standard navigational chart for that area.

Navigation was experiencing much improvement from electronic technology. A very brief note on this is as follows:

The Joy Stick:

Towards the end of the radio officer electronic and computer technology had made many changes in ships. From this technology the Captains of many of the largest ships afloat were controlling their vessels with sticks not much larger than an ordinary lead pencil – commonly called a “Joy Stick”. The main engine or engines would normally turn at a certain speed and moving this stick either way from the middle position simply changed the pitch of the blades on the propeller or propellers. The engine speed was not increased until the area of over half ahead or half astern was reached. From either of those areas the engine speed was brought up electronically until the maximum of full ahead or astern was obtained if desired.

Thrusters:

A bow thruster was now more or less standard equipment. This was a propeller fitted in the bow of the ship. Turning this propeller in one direction would move the bow to the left or port. Turning it in the opposite direction would move the bow to the right or starboard. The bow thruster had either a diesel or an electric motor and was operated by another “Joy Stick”. Naturally there were a number of these “Joy Sticks” fitted in various locations throughout the bridge or bridge wings for convenience. There could be many thrusters fitted in the ship depending on the size of the ship. These thrusters took the place of a tugboat and some of the larger ships had as many as five or more of these units mounted down the sides. This enabled the crew to move the ship sideways up to her berth when docking or move her out from her berth when leaving.

Gyro Compass:

Technology decreased the size and increased the efficiency of these compasses so that they were available for fairly small boats and yachts. Repeaters from these units could be connected to radio direction finders, radar and automatic pilots, and this greatly increased the navigation efficiency of small boats and the larger ones as well.

Automatic Pilot:

The automatic pilot was available to boats of all sizes. The automatic pilot greatly reduced the size of the wheel necessary for steering. Many large ships had a steering wheel smaller than the average automobile steering wheel if they had a steering wheel. Some of these units had only another “Joy Stick” for steering. Still others had a small wheel or horns similar to that in an aircraft.



Sperry Marine Systems, Great Neck, New York

This is the Sperry SRP-2000 Ship Control System. Sperry advertised this as the worlds most advanced autopilot. This system was a fascinating unit that was nearly impossible to describe briefly. The CRT Display (the large television type screen at the top of the photograph) was the principal information display for the operator. The upper portion displayed heading, heading rate and rudder angle on appropriately scaled displays. Each display scale had pointers to denote the ordered value and the actual value. The heading display was presented as a forty-eight degree segment of a compass card with fixed lubber line. The compass card segment moved with the actual heading. The heading order pointer was also moveable.

The heading display was always on the CRT. The operator could remove the heading rate and the rudder angle displays.

The lower portion of the CRT display was used to provide the operator with operating instructions and other data. This unique feature allowed the operator to select a particular mode of operation from an index page and then bring up specific operating instructions for the selected mode on the CRT display. In addition to operating instructions for the selected mode on the CRT display. In addition to operating instructions, other specific data was presented such as rudder limits and navigation data. The CRT also visually presented data for selecting speed input, ship loading, autopilot modes and other ship information.

The Alarm Panel (upper left of the wheel) presented an indication of eight discrete alarm conditions. The alarm system monitored critical functions including the alarm system itself. Alarm indication was by means of an audible alarm and an LED indicator highlighting the particular function at fault. A muting touch key was provided to silence the audible alarm and test and reset touch keys were provided. In addition to the eight discrete functions identified on the alarm panel, an alarm indicator was provided to direct the operator to the CRT display that would display the additional alarm data. The alarm functions of the SRP-2000 were protected from power loss by a battery supply that provided power for the audible and visual alarm even with the loss of system power.

Located at the top of the alarm panel was an alternate heading repeater for use in case of CRT display failure. This display showed deviation from heading-to-steer and gave an indication of heading change rate by means of a moving spot indication. A digital heading indicator (LCD) displayed the actual ship's heading. Touch keys were provided to synchronize the LCD heading repeater with the ship's gyrocompass. When used with an optional second heading reference input, this unit provided for an off-course alarm function.

The dimmer panel was to the left of the wheel and was not visible in the photograph. Three independent dimmer controls were provided to balance night illumination.

The helm unit provided independent rudder order signals to the rudder control units and to the CRT display. The rudder control unit was used to control the hydraulic power units that positioned the rudder. This unit was located in the steering compartment and eliminated high current cable runs to the wheelhouse. The SRP-2000 could control up to four rudder control units. The helm unit also contained a rudder order dial indicator. This was the dial directly above the wheel shaft with the round face. The helm unit provided manual steering control independent of the electronics elements of the steering control center. Each helm revolution resulted in twenty degrees of rudder movement. In other words, the helm or wheel was smaller than the steering wheel in any automobile and two complete revolutions to the left would cause the largest ship afloat to steer hard left or port, providing the rudder was amidships or steering straight forward. The same two revolutions to the right would cause a hard turn to the right or starboard. Great grandfather Spicer would never believe this. He likely had to turn the wheel on SILVER LEAF about six times to get her to steer hard left or right and this was out on her upper deck in all kinds of weather. If SILVER LEAF had been in a storm Great grandfather would have had to get one of his shipmates to help him hold her on course.

Getting back to the Sperry SRP-2000 Ship Control System, the two light coloured rectangular shaped panels directly above the helm was the autopilot keyboard. The autopilot keyboard was used to select the desired mode of automatic steering and to enter control parameters and calibration constants. The right hand portion of the keyboard was used to operate the CRT display. The left side of the keyboard contained five pre-selected mode keys and four keys reserved for future expansion. The five pre-selected mode keys were Satellite Navigator, Loran Navigator, Manual Navigator, Gyro and Rate. A LED indicator light appearing on the selected key indicated the selected mode.

The switch to the right of the helm or wheel is the system switch. The system switch was used to apply power to the system and to select the particular rudder control system or systems to be used.

The last portion of this fascinating unit was the status panel. This panel was the panel to the upper right of the helm just above the system switch. The status panel presented the port and starboard system status. Up to four pump systems could be handled. The rudder control units were located in the steering compartment. Power availability was indicated and indication was shown as to whether or not pumps were energized. The status panel showed the steering mode selected for each rudder control unit (autopilot, helm, emergency or remote). The status panel also contained the push switches for helm or remote steering (the two light coloured buttons) and the emergency steering rocker switch (the long switch at the bottom of the panel). The emergency steering rocker switch could have been used in an emergency to replace the helm or wheel.

This is a brief description only of this fascinating unit that represented a dramatic breakthrough for Sperry because it had many improvements over a conventional autopilot. The system could have been set-up in many ways as the operator performed each step as instructed by the instructions displayed on the CRT display (the same as reading a book). This system was set-up to perform in the most efficient way, whether the ship was loaded or light and whether it would be moving in traffic or on the open sea that would ensure that the steering preformed to provide the best fuel economy possible.

Fathometer:

Trying to record even a very brief description of these units on termination of the radio officer is nearly impossible. They could be found fitted in anything from a bathing suit to an ultra large crude carrier, the largest ship afloat. When you took a look into the fishing vessel of that era, you would find these units displaying everything for approximately five miles on the bottom of the ocean, the bottom of the vessel, and everything in between. This displayed in either feet or fathoms on a digital display, or a printed recording, or on an electronic colour display similar to colour television. But the “work horse” of the merchant shipping world normally had the unit that displayed the depth of water under the keel on a digital display in either feet or fathoms. On occasion she would have a recorder that gave a printed recording of the depth on paper. The more popular units provided the depth of water to a maximum of from five hundred to five thousand feet.

Radar:

Most ships were fitted with two radar units that were as important as the propeller. On occasion one would be the large ten-centimeter variety and the other the smaller three-centimeter unit. The smaller version was the better for navigating in rain and storms because it would not reproduce as much sea clutter as the former. They often were identical ten-centimeter radar and this meant the ship could carry identical spare parts and the two could be cannibalized in order to make one work in the event of failure and the want of spares. These units were not only the eyes of a ship but were becoming the brains as well. The more modern units were capable of searching for many miles around a ship and in turn giving a complete picture of anything within this area, normally a forty-mile radius. They were fitted with various automatic plotting and collision avoidance systems that not only automatically showed the picture for various targets and would do it for various times in the future in order to assist the navigator in making any changes at the moment. They would also automatically activate various alarms to indicate something was not quite correct and should be rectified within the navigation of the vessel fitted. They were used for navigation during coastal passages as much as the other electronic navigational aids. They were a fantastic piece of equipment! The larger more complex models required considerable training in both the operation and maintenance of the units. Fortunately most deck officers received this operating training ashore at various schools.





Raytheon Marine Company, Manchester, New Hampshire

This is the Raytheon Raycas Collision Avoidance System. The unit to the left was the Raytheon sixteen-inch Mariners Pathfinder Radar. The smaller unit with the many push button controls was the Anti-Collision Unit that could have been interfaced to operate with other marine radar systems. The Anti-Collision Unit was a computer and control panel that was capable of feeding into the radar various pieces of navigational information on the vessel this unit was fitted, and of up to twenty vessels, up to a 24 nautical mile range from this vessel. This unit could show the future traffic situation surrounding the vessel up to thirty minutes ahead.

The performance of the three basic sensors, radar, gyrocompass, and speed log, were continuously monitored by the system. In case of degraded performance of any of these sensors, the fault alarm would be activated, and the digital read-out display would indicate which sensor was malfunctioning. The radar performance monitor signals were displayed on the scope and provided the operator with a very accurate means of tuning the receiver.

A hard copy printer could have been installed with this system for periodic data logging of own ship and targets under tracking.

The Anti-Collision Unit functions were ergonomically grouped for easy identification and operation with a minimum of training required for the ships officers. Separate self-explanatory controls ensured safe and simple operation.

The numerical display consisted of the eight push button controls along the top of the Anti-Collision Unit. To the left of these push buttons, the dark area in the photograph was the LED display. For example, if you pushed the top right hand push button the LED display would indicate your own vessels speed in knots and course in degrees. The bottom left hand push button would display the same information for any target that had been circled by the "Joy Stick", the large lever on the Mariners Pathfinder Radar to the left of the LED display. The numerical display push button controls would display various pieces of information, such as bow crossing range, bow crossing time, target range, target bearings, and so forth.

The keyboard was the small push buttons just below the LED display of the numerical display panel. The keyboard permitted the simple code entry of special functions such as; acquisition exclusion boundary lines, centered plan position indicator and exclusion boundary lines, numerical read-out of radar performance, numerical read-out of drift and speed in automatic drift mode. In addition, the keyboard was used with the diagnostic program and for existing and future navigation programs (pre-programmed fairways, channel routing, etc.).

The warning panel was the six push button controls circled in white to the right of the keyboard panel. The push button between these two panels was the system clear and is used to silence or clear the warnings panel. The warnings panel provided both visual lights and audible beeps to alert the navigator of hazardous navigation conditions and system malfunctions, as labeled on the six indicators (push button controls).

The exclusion boundary line panel was the four push button controls circled in white just below the keyboard panel. A continuously visible exclusion boundary line could be selected fixed to own ship (range and bearing) or positioned free anywhere on the plan position indicator (the cathode ray tube or picture tube of the radar) to measure the distance and direction between any two points.

The targets panel was the six push button controls circled in white just below the exclusion boundary line panel. The six controls were: acquire target that was used for manual acquisition. Cancel target and cancel all target controls would cancel tracking of individual and all targets. Designate target would provide numerical read-out of target data in the display panel. Auto-Watch initiated automatic acquisition and guard zones. The Auto-Watch mode operated on the 6, 12, and 24 nautical mile range scales in the centered relative presentation. Two guard zones surrounded your own ship. The inner guard zone was generally fixed at 4 nautical miles. The variable range marker set the range of the outer guard zone. This could have been set between 1 to 24 nautical miles. Any approaching target that entered the guard zones would be automatically acquired and initiated target in guard zone warning. The targets range and bearing would appear in the numerical display and would be designated by a circle. Within a short time its accurate true or relative vector would appear. The potential collisions points control would present both true vectors and potential collisions points simultaneously.

The vectors panel was the six push button controls circled in white just below the targets panel. This panel controlled the various vectors that represented the various targets on the scope. For example, pushing the top right hand button on this panel would eliminate all other target data on the scope, except targets that are within or will move within the safe limits CPA/TCPA (closest point approach/time closest point approach).

The safe limits panel was the two-step type switches circled in white next to the exclusion boundary lines panel just below the warnings panel. The left switch was the CPA (nautical miles) and the other was the TCPA (minutes). Those switches set the outer guard zone in distance (1 to 24 nautical miles) or time (up to 30 minutes). Any approaching target that entered the guard zones would be automatically acquired and initiated target in guard zone warning. A circle designated the target. Its range and bearing would appear in the numerical display. Within a short time, its accurate true or relative vector would appear.

The own ship panel was the panel of six push button controls and the one step type switch circled in white below the safe limits panel. The step type switch was used to set your own ships speed in the system manually. The push buttons selected course up or north up on the scope, automatic drift, offset and reset for moving the picture on the scope off to one side, and speed from ship's log.

The two knobs between the vectors panel and own ship panel were the knobs for controlling the illumination of the Anti-Collision Unit. The top knob controlled illumination of the LED display and the switches and the bottom the panels.

The four knobs across the bottom of the Anti-Collision Unit were; vector time minutes, trial speed knots, drift direction degrees and drift speed knots. The vector time control would show the future traffic situation surrounding own ship by projecting the vectors to a future position up to 30 minutes ahead. Drift direction and drift speed permitted manual insertion of drift data, when automatic drift was not in use.

This is a very brief description of the Anti-Collision Unit and without radar experience or proper training on this equipment it can be very hard to understand.

The Mariners Pathfinder sixteen-inch radar was the latest of the standard radar equipment and was a fascinating unit by itself. The toggle switch at the bottom left of the front panel turned the antenna (the rotating scanner) on and off. The switch above this was the main power switch that set the radar at various stages of operation such as, stand by, transmitter on and placed the unit in operation. The two switches on the bottom panel to the far right were the anti-clutter switches. These were a welcome feature. The top one helped eliminate the clutter caused from rain showers and the bottom did the same for sea clutter. The older models of radar equipment could become nearly useless when encountering heavy rain showers or while traveling through heavy seas.

The remaining switches of this radar were the old standard controls, tune, gain, contrast, panel lights, bearings scale, range rings brilliance, power boost, range marker, variable range marker, variable range readout, gyro-heading up-north up, interference reject, cursor, compass, and the three new (at least new to me) the joy stick, the exclusion boundary lines position and the exclusion boundary lines brilliance.

This is a very brief description of both of these fascinating units. I hope it will give the reader some idea of the use of the various controls. My complete lack of education in the subject makes it difficult for me to understand most of them although I feel I have a rough idea of the use of each.

Satellite Navigators:

This was a completely separate system from the satellite communications system. The satellite navigators fitted in ships operated from the United States Navy's Satnav system. This was a world wide highly accurate, although intermittent, system of position fixing. There were various types of navigators that could be fitted in ships and some would give a printed recording of the information received. This Satnav system was replaced by the Navstar system that provided a continuous service. I know of one incident where the crew proved to the cartographers that they had shown a certain dock three hundred feet out of position, which gives a good indication of the accuracy of this navigation system. The only way satellite communications was directly involved in navigation was that certain highly technical ships would send a complete data printout on all functions of the main machinery at scheduled times over this communications system. Therefore, the many experts ashore could keep close tabs on all phases of what was taking place afloat. The average old freighter had neither the satellite navigation or communications system.

This Navstar system was upgraded and became the Global Positioning System and was known simply as GPS. Shortly after this many types, kinds, models, or whatever the terminology, of these GPS receivers became available. There were elaborate fixed receivers in aircraft and on the bridge of ships and one could get a hand held unit they could carry in their pocket. Kevin Layden on the VCS station staff had the first hand held unit I saw. He brought it to work when he first got it and kept fixing the position of his desk across the road among the spruce trees. He kept playing with it until he realized it required the number of the chart he was using as part of the tuning procedure. Once he inserted that – well, one felt he could fix the position of the wastebasket next to his desk. They were an amazing piece of equipment and provided a wealth of information including the correct time, distance traveled, speed one was moving and so on. My son, Mitchell, had a hand held and a cell phone and the two gave him communications and navigational information on a par with the most elaborate ship afloat.

Omega:

This was a worldwide navigational aid that was to be fully serviceable in 1980. It operated from eight transmitters located around the world on ten to fourteen kilohertz, a phase comparison system that was accurate from two to four miles.

Loran C:

This was a new loran system that was to be available for certain areas, operating on a lower frequency of one hundred kilohertz. A time difference and cycle matching position fix technique that was accurate to 0.13 miles from the ground wave, and ten to seventeen miles from the sky wave.

Automatic Navigators:

The satellite, omega, and loran C were all available as automatic receivers. These units displayed the date, precise time, present latitude and longitude, course and speed, and course and distance to any of nearly a dozen pre-selected way-points for both great circle and rhumb line routes. Also the total distance run and estimated time of arrival even left-right steering commands for maintaining a precise predetermined course. These automatic navigators were available with a speech option that actually spoke the navigation information in a clear, lifelike voice.

The omega and loran C could be used with manually operated receivers that would require special charts and special tables.

Loran A:

This was the old type 1.8 to 2.0 megahertz loran that had been around since World War II and was phased out during the 1980's. This had been accurate from one-half to one mile on the ground wave, and from three to six miles on the sky wave, and was only available to certain areas of the world. Loran A required special charts and correction tables in order to obtain a position fix.

Decca:

This was a very local coverage navigation system found only in eastern Canada and around the coast of Europe. Apparently when the Canadian system was terminated it took some time. So many fishermen had become so accustomed to using it, and did not know how to navigate with anything else, that there was pressure from this area to maintain the system awhile longer.

This is a very brief description of what could have been fitted in a ship at the time the radio officer was terminated. What could be and what was actually fitted were two complete and separate entities. There were a few ships around our coasts using nothing but a magnetic compass and a sextant for navigation. Most had radar at this time and that appeared to be the one item agreeable to all, and these units were small enough by this time to fit into fairly small boats. And most vessels appeared to have at least one electronic navigational aid, either a Loran or a Decca receiver.

As can be seen from this brief list, this equipment was both old and new. The first aid was the submarine bell, then the shore radio direction finder that lasted a half-century, and then the radio direction finder fitted in ships. After World War II the radio direction finder fitted in ships remained the main electronic aid for years, but at the same time the Loran and Decca crept into wide use in this area, eastern Canada. The other aids listed became available at the time of termination of the radio officer and the GPS seemed to take over and become the more prominent piece of navigational equipment.

The average Canadian ship had several of the items listed in this brief description. For communications most had one very high frequency radiotelephone and one two-megahertz radiotelephone. The three types of radiotelephone communication were audio modulation, single side band, and frequency modulation. My years of study and experience with all three types made it clear that this kind of radio communications would never be the equal of radiotelegraph.

I would like to make the following notes on the three types of radiotelephone. Audio modulation is the oldest type, I feel the best, and was used as the basis for comparison with the other two. Single side band was not new at this time. Major Howard Armstrong discovered single side band back as far as 1919 shortly after he discovered the oscillator that bears his name. Single side band became available to the marine communications world in the 1970's because of the technology created by World War II. The only figures I have found indicating the extent of improvement using this type over audio modulation is that single side band should be about thirty percent better. This is not much of an improvement. Audio modulation requires a lot more power than single side band and fades much easier over long distance. But single side band requires a more stable source of voltage and has the annoying tendency to distort the signal that is commonly known as the "Donald Duck Sound". This latter reason caused one of the large American airline companies, Trans World Airways I believe, to change all their equipment from single side band back to audio modulation. This was the reason the VCS station continued to use audio modulation on the distress frequency of 2182 kilohertz long after side band was available. Long distance communications is possible via radiotelephone, but it is best over short distances. This of course applies to all forms of communication but the many faults of radiotelephone tend to become more pronounced as distance increases.

The single side band or audio modulation equipment in a ship should be fitted in a separate room for this purpose off away from the bridge. The noise factor involved with the use of this equipment is very high. I feel that if any law were made concerning this frequency, it would be to the advantage of everyone that it stated that it is illegal to fit this equipment on the bridge or near the navigating officers. These people need the sense of hearing as much as sight and feel while navigating any vessel. Those vessels fitted with radiotelephone only normally left this equipment turned off except when they called a station. I feel this is the correct way to operate this equipment. Of course this was the reason we seldom could make contact with these vessels. The average crew that monitored 2182 kilohertz continually was nearly as hard to contact as the one that turned the equipment off. These crews did not understand the proper adjustment of the squelch control and normally left this turned up so high they could hear nothing but the static and signals for miles around. These crews could not hear what was taking place around their vessel. After many hours of this continual noise they could not hear a call to their own vessel.

Frequency modulation requires a large band of frequencies and this type is restricted to the very high frequencies that are capable of providing the necessary space. Natural interference is mainly in the form of audio modulation. This is the main reason frequency modulation appears to be less susceptible to this type of radio interference. A ship receives the worst our environment has to offer. These natural weather storms contain a lot of interference in the form of electrical static. I assume this was one reason marine communications chose this type over audio modulation when it moved up into the very high frequencies. The only other reason that I can think of is that those who made this decision must have felt that radiotelephone would have the backup of the marine radiotelegraph system. Frequency modulation should never be used for distress communications and this is the reason aircraft use audio modulation on the very high frequencies. The discriminator in a frequency modulation receiver serves as the detector in an audio modulation receiver. This discriminator will either block (squelch) on the reception of two signals, equal in strength, or if the two signals are of unequal strength will pass only the stronger signal. The audio modulation receiver will pass all signals, at least in theory. Any station, especially one in distress, should

have a much better chance of making contact over the top of existing communications using audio modulation. For this reason I do not feel channel sixteen, 156.8 megahertz should ever be given the official label distress frequency.

Change in Canadian laws made it legal for Canadian ships to sail from the area of Vera Cruz, Mexico, to the area of Baffin Island, North West Territories, fitted with radiotelephone only providing they remained within six hundred miles of land before the radio officer was terminated. Fortunately I did not have to sail in one, but felt sorry for those who did.

THIS HISTORY PROJECT

I started the research on the history of this project in 1975. So many kept telling me that if I wrote a book on the subject it would help pay for the research. I did not believe my writing was good enough to publish a book. I wanted to learn this history and I wanted to pass it on to others. Thank God I was not stupid enough to borrow money to have the book printed. A minimum order of one thousand books would have cost about twenty-two thousand dollars. I would still have 950 copies of the one thousand.

A good friend was Brian Wilkins who was Government Accounts Manager with the local Xerox Company. He gave me a lot of old legal size obsolete paper. I used that and my old Underwood Golden Touch typewriter to write the 675-page manuscript. Brian sold me a Microfiche Reader so that I could purchase a lot of this history in microfiche diazo. He also gave me demonstrations on a new elaborate copy machine when the manuscript was ready. This gave me many copies of the manuscript that I mailed to every book publisher I could find. No one was interested in publishing this into a book and so many authors have had this same problem that I did not pay much attention to this. I decided that I might be able to get a minimum order printed if I advertised it on my own. I had a local printer make up a sample front cover and then bought advertising using this sample cover in various publications. That was the biggest waste of money I ever spent. I had spent all my free time and more on the research. All this time and money should have been spent on my family.

**RADIO STATIONS
COMMON ?**

NOT THIS KIND



Spurgeon G. Roscoe

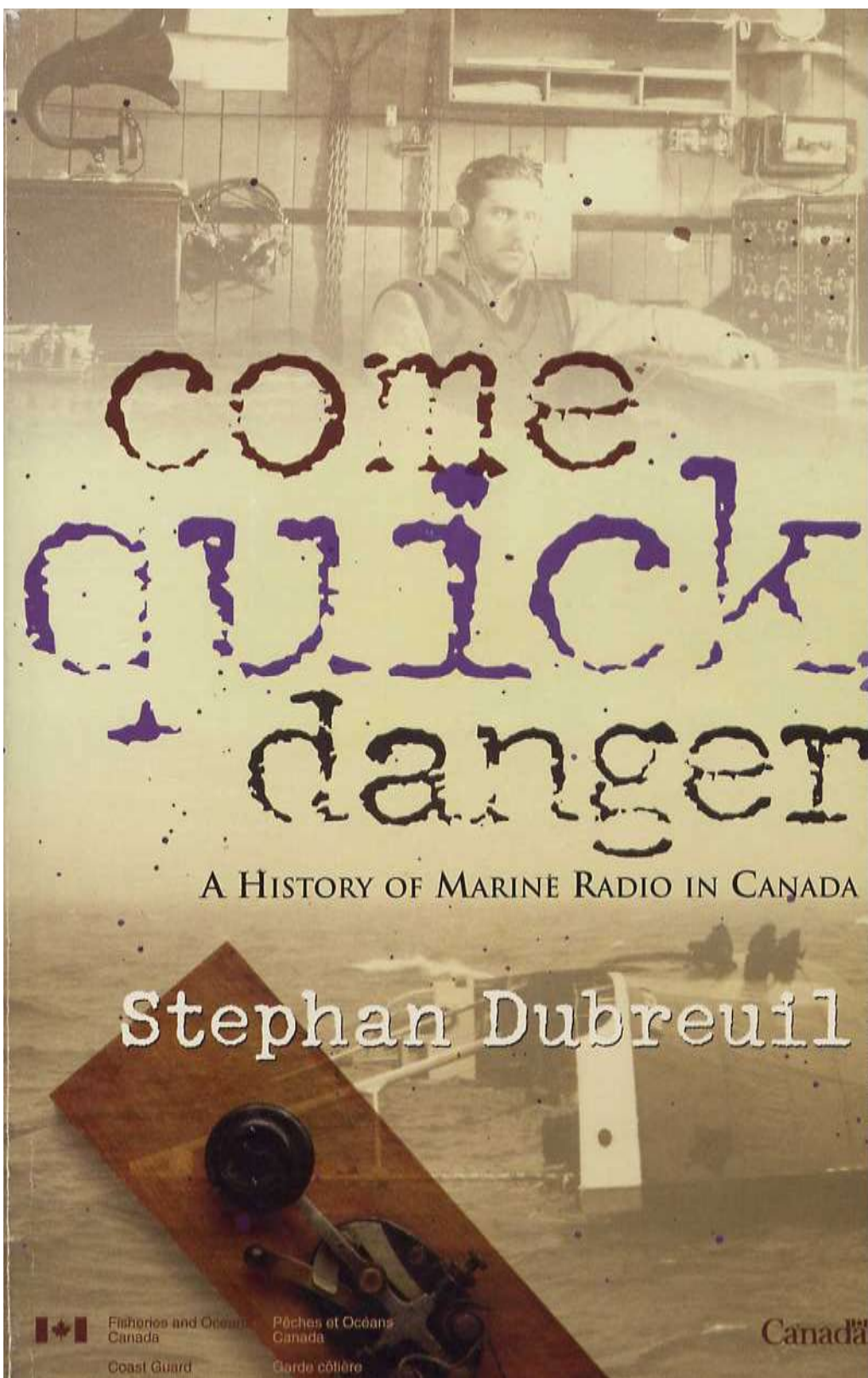
This is the sample front cover.

There is no chance of having this published in book form. If this were published into a book there would be no financial gain and nothing but more expense. I enjoy working on it from time to time to try and improve it in one way or another and it gives me something to do. I will keep it here in case someone has some interest in it. If I had it in book form I would not be able to do anything with it but read it and here I can change it at any time.

In 1982 I tried to terminate my interest in this subject. I doubt that I will ever be able to manage that. I bought a large plastic storage box and placed the manuscript and photographs I had collected in that. I have around 500 photographs and some of them cost as much as forty dollars each. I stored this out of sight and was so fed up with everything, including the job at the VCS station that I began to wonder why I was so stupid to waste my life at such foolishness. I still feel that way and often have to mentally go back and relive various stages of my life to understand why I did what I did.

When I retired from the VCS station in 1995 the Canadian Coast Guard decided to write a history of this service before it was lost. They asked to use my manuscript for their project. I still had one copy of the manuscript left and I knew by then that others had tried to record this history. Apparently no one had been foolish enough to go to the work I had, but there were at least six other attempts. The Coast Guard used some of my photograph collection.

The Coast Guard hired Stephan Dubreuil to write their book and called it "Come Quick, Danger". This was printed by the Canadian Government in 1998 and is ISBN 0-660-17490-1. They had a book signing ceremony at the Maritime Museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Sunday October 25th, 1998. I was told to invite as many as I could and quite a few of the old timers showed up. One fellow who was there wanted to know if he could see my original manuscript and I said sure come on up to my home. He wanted to know if he could borrow it and put it on the Internet. I was so fed up with everything I gave it to him and hoped I would never see it again. He said he would have it back in a week. He brought it back the next day and said it was too valuable for him to keep any longer. He had made a couple of copies of it. He put it on the Internet. I did not have access to the Internet so have no idea what it was like.



come quick danger

A HISTORY OF MARINE RADIO IN CANADA

Stephan Dubreuil



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Coast Guard

Garde côtière

Canada

Come Quick, Danger is a chapter of Canadian history that almost didn't get written. It is the saga of radio communications in the service of the Canadian Coast Guard to protect and save ships and their crews while sailing off the three coasts of this country. The book is largely based on first person accounts of people who were there at the time when ships were in trouble, and who used the radio waves to protect the seafarers and their cargos, and in some cases to rescue the shipwrecked. The reason this book almost didn't get written is that many of the accounts took place a long time ago. Stephan Dubreuil's interlocutors were not young men and women. In fact, a number of those on his list died before he could get to them.

In *Come Quick, Danger*, Dubreuil takes us from Marconi and the dawn of radio at the turn of the century, through to Canada's role during the sinking of the *Titanic* and in other maritime incidents, and brings us right to today's age of satellite communications.

It is important for Canadian history that this book was written.

Gerard I. Kenney, Eng.

Formerly head of engineering of Arctic telecommunications systems for Bell Canada.



There are bound to be errors in any history project and that is the one thing I have learned through this if nothing else. The official historians make mistakes sometimes. These are the ones with access to anything and everything and the ones who also have a staff of assistants to help with any project.

At a family gathering in 2000 some members of my family started teasing me about my old typewriter and mainly the fact that most of my periods were holes in the paper and so on. My two sons and their wives gave me an old computer and the help I needed to get it going for Christmas 2000. I played some cribbage, solitaire, and so on, with this thing for awhile and then decided to try and write some letters and so on with it. Looking around for something to do I put the manuscript on the computer and brought it up to date. A snowball would have a better chance in surviving hell than this manuscript will in becoming a book. But it has given me something to do. I also find it quite interesting since it has been so long since I wrote it. I have tried to up grade it and eliminate the date as much as possible so it will be of some use to anyone interested in the subject. I have done more research in certain areas because I have written several articles on this subject in various publications.

When I went into this exercise in a big way I wanted to try and explain to the Canadian radio operator that we were missing out on a very good trade if we had the organization that the foreign countries operated under. I also wanted to describe a lot of this in detail so that the foreign operator would understand the reason they were hearing so much damn foolishness from the Canadian stations. My 1982 manuscript more or less ended here with the exception of the following that I will try and bring up to date.

The research for this publication indicates we did not have any discipline. This is the reason we did not have a large merchant fleet. You cannot operate a ship or a fleet of ships without discipline. I believe discipline is composed of two components only; education and policing. It would appear that we have had little of either component. Naturally, the more effort we put in the one component, the less we need in the other. If we were better educated, we would not need so much policing. It was rather amazing our system worked as well as it did. I feel that if the Canadian fleet had been better educated it would have operated more efficiently, but would have increased in size as a result of this education. The one person I felt most sorry for was the Canadian fishing master. Through ignorance on the part of all concerned with his fealty, he tended to resemble an imbecile. A fishing master was an expert within his chosen field. One that I felt required a lot of natural ability. The Canadian fishing master lacked two key components connected with the larger vessel. These vessels grew in size but failed to realize the need for growth in education. The fishing master lacked a lot of assistance. He needed help from a good radio officer at least, one who could get help from a good electronics officer if needed. He also needed help from a good navigating officer, one who would ensure a safe passage from the homeport to the fishing grounds and return.

The Canadian Coast Guard Radio Stations were nothing more than a reflection of this Canadian fleet, be it the largest, VCS Halifax, or one of the smallest, an isolated station that communicated with two vessels a year only. If our ships had been brought up to the standards as laid down by international agreement our coastal radio stations would have improved accordingly. We, the so-called radio officers in this fleet needed a lot of improvement. On close examination you found that our most senior, experienced, and in some cases best officers were involved in accidents. They had been involved because they needed help. Help from a good radio officer who was capable of at least knowing when a piece of electronic equipment was working properly. A radio officer was the only person who could provide the vital communications so necessary when an accident had taken place. Any other officer was too busy trying to save the ship. They did not have the time, equipment, or knowledge, to activate a proper call for help, and that was apparent for some time.

Because Canadian captains and mates were sailing Canadian ships without proper radio officers, it made one wonder about their overall proficiency, especially the ones sailing these ships in violation of international law. One would think that they would demand good radio officers when the law gave them this right. Actually, on occasion one would hear them brag of sailing their ships without a radio officer and state they had no trouble. No trouble is correct because they had nothing and accomplished nothing more than leave a number of messages that they should have picked up at nearly every station they passed. One would have thought the crews in these ships would have demanded radio officers. Especially if they had

known how inefficient the captains and mates were, whether it was routine communications or the communications involved during any accident.

A study of the multitude of rules and regulations that were made by the various powers that be within the international marine communication world was a rather boring project. When someone who knew little or nothing about a subject made a point of telling the experts the way it should be done, human nature has made a provision for us to find most of these incidents rather humorous. Canada on occasion added some humour to the various discussions conducted by the members of the international marine communications world. But I am Canadian. I had no choice in the matter, and for this reason some of this was not funny to me.

Captain Felix Riesenberg wrote the preface for Karl Baarslag's excellent book "SOS to the Rescue" in 1935. In this preface Captain Riesenberg quoted the statistics kept by Lloyd's Register of Shipping to show the dramatic decrease in the number of accidents during the first years that ships were fitted with radiotelegraph. For example, 1.20 percent of the American tonnage and 1.54 percent of the foreign tonnage was lost via accidents in 1904. In 1931 these figures had decreased to 0.22 percent of the American tonnage and 0.48 percent of the foreign tonnage. The British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union Journal "Signal" listed a similar set of figures for the decade from 1969 to 1979 inclusive in their July/August 1981 issue. These figures showed an increase in the number of ships lost during the last few years before this survey was made. There were 336 accidents in 1977 that represented the loss of 0.27 percent of the world fleet. In 1979 there were 465 accidents representing the loss of 0.54 percent of the world fleet. One wonders if the field of communications contributed to this increase. The world economic condition was such that good crews should have been relatively easy to hire for those ships.

The first motor-driven steamships were fitted with sufficient sails to ensure safe navigation should the engine have failed. These sails were not eliminated until the steam engine had been proven reliable. The same procedure should have been provided with satellite communications. The satellite communications unit should have been fitted in the radio room with the radiotelegraph equipment. When it was proven safe and reliable for a ship to sail with satellite communications only, then the radiotelegraph equipment could be removed.

The vessels owned and operated on the Great Lakes were the largest portion of the Canadian fleet, and they were the ones that controlled the Canadian fleet. There is a big difference in the operation of a fleet on inland fresh water and the operation of a fleet navigating the salt water of the world's oceans. Marine communications in Canada definitely needed a good injection of experience and knowledge gained from good experience in the saltwater fleet of the world's oceans.

One can only hope that some authority somewhere is keeping a sharp eye on the accident statistics to see if there is an increase now that the radio officer has been terminated. The main problem is the fact we cannot reproduce the TITANIC disaster. It is now impossible to get the upper society of the human race in the one vehicle as it was with the TITANIC. The TITANIC accident gave us ninety years of one fantastic trade. It would be impossible to get the modern version of the same people in the one vehicle today. They all have their own jet aircraft.

THE LAST VCS STATION

The last VCS station was built during the winter of 1987 and the spring of 1988. The first radiotelegraph contact with this station was when Joe Burgoyne worked the IRVING TIMBER, call sign VSBT2 on 4 megahertz. Bill Lamont made the first radiotelephone contact with the PROOF GALLANT with call sign D5YO on channel 57. These contacts were made on January 19th, 1988. Scott Clements was the first to use 500 kilohertz from this station at 281745 GMT or 281345 AST January 1988. The 500-kilohertz operator was rather lonely up in the old station during that nine-day period. The official opening was not until the opening ceremony commencing at 11 AM on May 30th, 1988. At that time Mr. W. F. Cunningham, Regional Manager, Telecom and Electronics performed the welcome and introduction of guest. Mr. K. C.

Curren, Regional Director, Coast Guard, introduced the guest speaker the Honourable Stewart McInnes Minister of Public Works. This opening ceremony terminated with a light luncheon.

They simply built a piece on the west and south sides of the station that opened in Ketch Harbour in 1970, with a roof over the top of this new section and over the old flat roof to create this new station. The new west piece became a new operations room with two offices at the south end of the large operations room. To the north of this room was an outside door for emergency use to the west. This had a bit of a porch and a pair of swallows raised a couple of families up in the eaves of this porch for the first year or two. They were like the rest of us and became sick and tired of the place and left for good. It is hard to believe that they put up with the light that was on continuous near their nest and the noise of the operations room as long as they did. This porch was reached via a small hallway across the north end of the operations room. The outside door was to the west or left, and to the east or right was a stairway down into the old basement. The old equipment room became a technical workshop where each technician had their own workbench. A new basement was built to the west of the old one and this was a new equipment room. Along the eastside of the technical workshop was another hallway. This gave access to a power board in the room at the north end. Along the eastside of this hallway was a shower and washroom with storage lockers for each technician along the west wall of the hallway. Just south of the shower room along the eastside of the hallway was a storage room for the various pieces of paper, forms, pens, and what have you, necessary for the operation of the station. There was a door on the west-end of the technical workshop next to the north wall that entered into a dirty room. This dirty room had a drill press, vice and so on for the heavy dirty work that was required from time to time. The door at the north end of this room was a large door similar in size to the one from the technical workshop near it. This door opened on to a paved driveway where the technicians could park a vehicle. The doors were large enough to bring in large objects.

The southwest corner of the technical workshop was the technician's office. This contained a couple of desks and a room with many small spare parts. This office had a large bookcase that held the many manuals for the various pieces of equipment, and of course the most important item in the office was the technician's coffeepot.

Between the technician's office and the hallway along the east side was a walkway that led out the old door of the basement to a set of stairs that led up to the old outside doors on the south side of the station. There was cleaning stores under these stairs and to the east of the stairs was the furnace room and the access door to this room was at the end of the hallway just past the storeroom holding the paper, forms, pens and so on. When one went out the doors where the old outside doors had been on the south side of the station, one now entered into another hallway. If one went straight across the east-end of this hallway they went outside the building via another set of double doors. If one turned right and went west along this hallway it would lead them back into the large operations room. As one walked towards the operations room the first door on the left or south side led into another fairly large room. Along the east wall were metal lockers where each of the radio operators could store personnel effects and lock the locker if they desired. Along the west wall were two washrooms. When one went down to the end of this room it became a kitchen complete with stove, refrigerator, microwave oven, double sinks and again, all one would need for a banquet including a fairly large kitchen table. Just before one entered the large operations room via this hallway and just behind the two washrooms was a cloakroom. In the cloakroom one found more storage shelves, another refrigerator for various soft drinks and various items of junk food one could buy, plus a large rack along the east wall that held coats hung on hangers. Pat Falvey's old wooden hanger hung there for years and had been brought down from the old cloakroom. Pat operated the station before I went there in 1975 so this hanger must have been there nearly thirty years or longer. Pat's nephew, Rick, took this old hanger home with him the day the station closed.

If one went back to the east end of this hallway they could turn right and go out doors via the south side of the building as described above. If they turned left and went north back through the double doors where the old outside doors had been they would go back to the stairs. If one went down the stairs they went back down into the basement where they had just come up. If one went up the stairs they went up into the old operations area of the building. The old operations room across the full length of the north side of the building was now divided into two rooms. The one on the west was now an office and the one on the eastside was now a training room. This training room was in the area of the old supervisor's desk and the

old communicator's room. The old cloakroom and senior operations supervisor's room was now gone and this area was open and used as a reception area. A small closet or cloakroom was on the north wall of the reception area between the doors to the office and training room. Right behind this cloakroom was a small storeroom that one entered via a door in the west wall of the new training room, next to the north wall. The two old offices on the west wall and south end of this area were still there and now the windows in these offices looked down into the new large operations room. On the east wall was another office next to the new training room and the old men's washroom was the same with the addition of another toilet just inside the main door. The old ladies washroom remained the same as well. The old kitchen had now become another office with the same window facing south. This should be a good description of the last VCS station. God, what a waste of money!

The new operations room had every new gadget imaginable and some one could not believe. The first time I operated it, it reminded me of one of Henry Ford's World War I model T "Tin Lizzy" Ford cars. Actually it reminded me of that every time I operated it including the last time. If one had taken one of those old cars and dropped a 460 cubic inch big block motor in it, then drove it down the road it would give one the same feeling. Oh yes, it would go down the road but one would have to handle it very, very carefully or the old car would just simply fly to pieces. This is exactly what was taking place in this room. We were ramming a ninety-year old communications system through the latest technical marvels. Each position had the latest metal console with a computer terminal. These computers were operated via servers and it is a wonder there are not messages still lost in what is now called cyber space. I was with the federal government from 1956 until 1995 and had seen a waste of money at times, but this was the biggest waste I ever encountered.

The two offices along the south side of the operations room were used more or less the same. One held a shredder for destroying any papers one wanted to get rid of. A good photocopy machine was in this room and that is the only thing I miss from work. When the station received the first of these machines Gus Crewe was the TSM – Technical Station Manager. He told me he did not know what they would use it for and said I was more than welcome to use it for my history project, and to use it often because they were paying for so many thousand copies. There was a desk in this room and this desk was where the operator assigned to go over the daily traffic each evening at ten o'clock, went over the messages sent and received to make sure all was as it should be. Also on one wall were photographs of the station mascot. A mother fox had raised several families just outside the station and we used to see her often, and one evening when the outside doors were open for ventilation she actually came in the operations room and laid down by the operator on the 8-megahertz radiotelegraph. This position was the first position on the right as one walked into the operations room from the hallway leading into it. No one to my knowledge touched the fox but several fed it pieces of their lunch. The fox was your typical red fox found in that area. There were also several white tail deer that would visit the station from time to time. Just before they built this new station they built a high fence around the property. This must have cost a small fortune and the only thing it did was kill two of these white tail deer. They became tangled in the fence and one of the operators had a rifle in his vehicle and was able to put them out of their misery.

The other room on the south side of the building was larger than the one just described. I believe it was to be used as the supervisor's office. It had a map on the wall, a bookcase with some books that were rarely used and another computer terminal – mainly for playing games. The supervisor's had a locked filing cabinet in there as well, along with a pile of sick leave forms and a couple of desks.

Just outside the small office with the photocopy machine was the southeast corner of the main operations room. In this corner were two computers. One was used mainly to back up the daily traffic sent and received and give a printout on a continuous belt of paper. This was part of the daily traffic check and the operator doing same had to tear off each message or probably the proper terminology would be separate each message. The other computer was over nearer the supervisor's desk. This one was a Hewlett Packard machine used to control the various lighthouses around the area. We were told the Israel Army had this unit designed for blowing up things, mainly bridges, highways and probably the odd Palestinian. The Canadian Coast Guard must have felt that if it could do that it could operate or control a lighthouse. In other words, this machine replaced the light keepers. It would tell you the amount of fuel left in the tank on station, if the fog horn was on or off, if the main light was on or off, if the emergency light was on or off, and if it worked. It would let you turn this equipment on or off and so on. It would alarm when some of these

functions were performed and one had to turn off this alarm manually. It would alarm nearly every morning when the sun came up and was visible at the Chebucto Head light station. For some reason the sun shining on the equipment at this station would turn the fog horn on. One could no longer call the light keeper and have him check something out of the ordinary. There was no one there. One had to tell the powers that be and they in turn sent out a helicopter to check, repair, and what have you. Of course the weather had to be good so that a helicopter could fly. When the weather would not permit a helicopter to go check, one simply told the powers that be and then broadcast whatever may or may not have been working. By this time another empire was in full operation, ECAREG CANADA, and this organization made up what needed a broadcast. Good grief it was exciting!

The supervisor's desk had a telephone and another filing cabinet mainly for the storage of magazines. The duty supervisor could contemplate his navel for so long and then had to have something to do. There was a television monitor on this desk that showed the front entrance to the building. This was normally locked and one could see who was coming, or was at the door ringing the bell. One could unlock the door from this position. You could also speak to the one at the front door via an intercom.

The supervisor's desk had a computer terminal and this was where all incoming messages to be transmitted to ships were made up. The computer did most of the work such as counting the number of words but one needed to clean them up a bit before they could be transmitted. When one brought up the ship on the computer it gave all the information on the ship. If it didn't one could enter this via the International Telecommunication Union Publications or simply list the ship by name only. This entry would be confirmed when the first operator to work the ship made contact. When the 8-megahertz or 500 kHz operator made up a traffic list, which could have been made up by simply pushing a few buttons on any of the computer terminals, it would bring up all the traffic on hand by call sign in alphabetical order. If the ship were entered by name only, it would appear in alphabetical order, if there were more than one, at the beginning of the traffic list that the computer transmitted over the air when set to transmit.

One could say the computer that was used to make up the message traffic at the supervisor's desk is the one that replaced the communicators. When the British Commonwealth Communications scheme was moved out to the VCS station in 1964 communicators were hired to send and receive the message traffic to and from the station. These people were typists that simply put the message traffic received from the ships on to a teletype to Canadian National/Canadian Pacific Telegraphs. The messages to be transmitted to the ships came in to the station via the same teletypes. These were the teletypes that replaced the landline telegraph circuit in August 1956. These teletypes were upgraded as time progressed to an Infomode system that was an early form of e-mail. But before this Infomode system came into use there were Telex machines, a teletype one dialed up like an ordinary telephone to the various subscribers. There was also an automatic weather machine that collected the weather observations received from ships and transmitted the various forecasts to the station for broadcast to ships.

The supervisor's desk was right next to the entrance from the hallway. The last thing on the right hand wall of the hallway as one entered the operations room was the gate alarm. When they built the fence around the property prior to building this new station, they put a double gate in the only entrance down by the road – the Ketch Harbour Road or Nova Scotia route 349 – the road from Halifax out to Sambro. These gates were left open and just inside these gates were two electronic eyes, one on either side of the drive up into the station. When something passed between these two eyes it would activate this gate alarm near the supervisor's desk. Let's face it, you never knew when something might try and sneak up on us and steal a message, our lunch, or something else. This was quite handy and would let us know when a few white tail deer had entered the property. One of the more memorable alarms was late one night or early one morning, the choice is yours, when two fishermen parked their car in this alarm and were down there sharing the one girl. We kept a large storage box for garbage down by these gates. The station garbage consisted of a lot of large plastic garbage bags filled with paper and required this large box to keep these bags of paper from blowing around and making not only a mess but an eyesore. The station janitor used to burn this garbage in a proper incinerator, but this either became too dangerous when it set the grass around it on fire, or else was polluting the air. Maybe the local garbage collection agency complained and felt they should be hauling it away. We never learned why, but it created this large box to store the station garbage for the regular garbage collection. Every so often when some clown went by the station they would stop and set this box

on fire. We managed to see this and put the fire out several times, but we managed to miss this just as many times and the box burned beyond repair. After awhile the powers that be got tired of building these wooden boxes and made one out of stainless steel. One can only imagine the cost of all of this. When the station closed the Sambro Coast Guard Lifeboat Station grabbed this stainless steel box and used it as their garbage box.

The last VCS station – 1988 to 1996 – Operations Room

North

Door with bird's nest

The emergency exit – hallway – and stairway to basement.

Doorway

High Frequency Radiotelephone
Position

6 and 12 Radiotelegraph
Position

Medium Frequency Radiotelephone
Position

4, 16 and 22 Radiotelegraph
Position

8 Radiotelegraph
Position

500 kHz Radiotelegraph
Position

The Entrance Hallway

Training Posiiton

Supervisor's Desk
Lighthouse Computer

Chart Table Computer Printer

Computer and Printer

The Larger Office

The Smaller Office

South



Technician Paul Britton

This was the Halifax Coast Guard Radio operations building Ketch Harbour, Nova Scotia from 1988 until 1996.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

The Halifax Coast Guard Radio Transmitter Site Pennant, Nova Scotia from 1988 until 1996.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

The main operations room in the operations building at Ketch Harbour. That is supervisor Dan MacDonald standing and on the telephone at the supervisor's desk. Keith Bennett VE1BKB is operating the computer behind Dan. Mark Chatham is operating the 8-mHz CW position and Spud Roscoe VE1BC is operating the 16/22-mHz position in front of Mark.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

Mark Chatham is operating the 8-mHz CW position and Spud Roscoe VE1BC is operating the 16/22 mHz CW position on the left. Note that Mark is using a Vibroplex Iambic Keyer and the controls for that keyer are just to the left of the digital clock.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

Mark Chatham is copying a message from a ship on the 8-mHz CW position. This message is going right on the computer screen and when Mark gives the ship his acknowledgement of receipt he will send the message direct to the addressee. Spud Roscoe VE1BC is on the 16/22-mHz CW position and the operator on the 6/12 mHz CW position cannot be seen.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

From the left to the right is the 500 kHz CW position, the medium frequency radiotelephone position and the high frequency radiotelephone position.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

From the left to the right one can see the medium frequency radiotelephone position and the high frequency radiotelephone position.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

This is Mitali Das operating the medium frequency radiotelephone position.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

This is Vern Hillier operating the high frequency radiotelephone position. The printer sitting on top of the rack was used with the SITOR, the light blue unit in the rack and the computer in the foreground was part of the SITOR system.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

This is looking down at Vern Hillier operating the high frequency radiotelephone position. Note the black Radio Shack speakers mounted on top of the equipment.



Canadian Coast Guard Search and Rescue

This is Vern Hillier operating the high frequency radiotelephone position. If the Coast Guard photographer who took these photographs had taken any of the 500 kHz CW position and the training position we did not receive copies of them.

The diagram above the photographs is not drawn to scale but will give one some idea of the layout of the operations room. The 500 kHz position was right across from the entrance hallway. The positions were laid out spaced more or less an equal distance from each other. The high frequency radiotelegraph positions were along the east wall with the other positions along the west wall. The only windows were the four vertical windows grouped as one unit in the southwest corner of the room. At least these windows cranked out and one could open them. I saw a few of the operators actually jump out these windows onto the lawn outside. Of course there was little daylight beyond the 500 kHz position but it was not all that bad. The walls were coated in some elaborate paneling that was supposed to absorb noise and were dark green in colour on the east wall and beige on the other walls. The floor was elevated and consisted of large squares of some heavy material coated in carpet. When one lifted one of these panels they could go down into a crawl space about two feet deep. This crawl space hid all the wiring to each position and if one lifted every panel there would be no carpeted floor, only the cement floor of this crawl space and the steel racks that held the panels. This carpet on the floor was very good and was dark green/gray in colour. It showed little or no sign of wear after its eight years of use. The large wall panels seemed to work as well as one could expect, although one of the first things that happened is that someone purchased a large map of the world that covered most of the northwest wall, next to the radiotelephone positions. This map must have cancelled the sound absorbing quality from the panels behind it.

There was no intercom in this operations room because each and every position, desk, office, workbench, and what have you, in the whole building had a telephone. These telephones were identical to the telephones in use at the large department stores around the country and one could dial up any desk, office, workbench and what have you, in the whole building. They could also dial up several regular telephone lines from these telephones or answer any telephone call that came into the station. These telephones also

had speakers that permitted one to say something to everyone over every telephone in the building. Jim Christian, one of the radio operators, used to keep us awake by simply announcing "Attention K-Mart Shoppers" over these telephones. One of the most difficult aspects of operating this station was staying awake. I found the four-hour watch during the afternoon the most difficult period. It seemed as though I would fall asleep around one-thirty, and fall asleep as much as six times, and each time I awoke the clock would still be stuck on one twenty-six. I put in many four-hour afternoon periods that I did not contact a soul from the 4, 16 and 22 megahertz position. There had to be three radio operators on duty in order to justify a supervisor. So needless to say each shift had three radio operators whether they were required or not. It is a wonder the station ever closed.

One would go home from a day shift described above with a headache from forcing themselves to stay awake. Quite often they would then have to force themselves to try and sleep before they went back in and forced themselves to stay awake again all night. I spent most of my time forcing myself to either stay awake or try and sleep. The most frustrating thing one can think of is the neighbour's lawn mower. God that was aggravation! The sound would fade as it moved away, and would gradually get louder as it approached and then fade away again. Dr. C. K. You a surgeon instructor at the Halifax hospitals came out and spent a night shift with us one night to act as an interpreter with a Korean crew that had an injured crewmember. He told us the next morning that he did not know how we did it and he added most of us did not smoke or drink coffee. One does not wonder how we did it one can only wonder why we did it!

The satellite antenna that was fitted in ships was perfected in 1975. Apparently the antenna would lock on a satellite with the pitch of the ship but would loose the satellite on the roll of the ship, or vice versa. This job went down hill from there and signals just disappeared. It seemed as though there were fewer signals to be heard with each new shift at the station. When I retired in 1995, twenty years later, there was little to be heard or worked. We did a broadcast on more and more information and I am convinced no one copied any of it. Why would they? ECAREG CANADA transmitted reams of information to each and every vessel. ECAREG actually transmitted the current weather forecast to each vessel for a short time period although by the time the vessel received the actual message a new weather forecast was on the broadcast.

One could operate the whole station from the training position. It had a duplicate switch of every operating position in the building.

The three high frequency radiotelegraph positions were identical. Each one had a control unit for an electronic telegraph key, with a digital clock just to the right of it at the top of the rack facing the operator. At the top of the rack on the right was various push button switches that selected various antenna and two knobs that one could select the best direction for two antennae. The lighted push buttons just below the key control/clock panel selected the various transmitters for the various radiotelegraph frequencies. To the right of this on the right hand rack was a blank panel except for the 8-megahertz position. On that position was a unit that assisted the computer in making radiotelegraph broadcasts and a fixed radiotelegraph receiver for 8364 kHz. There were two Hagenuk receivers one in each of the two racks just below this equipment. Below the receivers was the operating table or shelf that held the computer keyboard. This table or shelf had a plexi-glass top with a variety of items under it that one might need to operate the position. The most used item was the list of charges for transmitting a message to various countries.

The 8364 kHz receiver was for lifeboat transmissions. Lifeboat radios were able to transmit on two radiotelegraph frequencies, 500 kHz and 8364 kHz. 8364 kHz was the centre frequency of the old calling band on the 8-megahertz band of radiotelegraph frequencies, and was never used as a calling frequency. Back during the days of the "Rock Bound" transmitters, the ones that were crystal controlled and could transmit on the frequencies assigned to the transmitter only, they had a certain number of calling frequencies and a certain number of working frequencies. The passenger vessels called on the lower calling frequencies and the freighters called on the upper calling frequencies. 8364 kHz was the centre frequency of these calling frequencies on the 8-megahertz band and was not used as a calling frequency as stated. Therefore, every coast station using the high frequencies was continually scanning the calling frequencies on 8-megahertz. These stations scanned this band around the clock 24 hours each and every day of the year, and this would ensure that this frequency was receiving the most attention. These stations went over this 8364 kHz frequency each and every time they went from the passenger frequencies to the freighter

frequencies. In this way a lifeboat radio that was very low power, the majority operated from a hand-cranked generator, would have a better chance of being heard. The amazing thing about all this is that I operated radio from 1956 until 1995 and I did not hear a lifeboat signal on 8364 kHz and did not meet anyone who had. It was an excellent idea and it was better to be safe than sorry. Come to think of it, I did not hear a lifeboat radio period. When you realize the hours I spent monitoring 500 kHz during the silent periods of 15 to 18 minutes and 45 to 48 minutes past each and every hour, this becomes rather amazing. I used to test the lifeboat radio in the ships I sailed in that were fitted, but I did not go to the trouble of setting one up for a chat with someone. This was a rather involved procedure and would have required someone to crank the generator for me while I operated.

The one lifeboat radio I should have heard and didn't was in March 1971. I was sailing in GYPSUM EMPRESS with call sign GHZF. Ships have a personality and if you were going to run into something out of the ordinary you would likely be in "the EMPRESS". There are many bad accidents in March because of the bad weather. The weather is so bad at times that one can only wonder why they do not make it illegal to sail the North Atlantic during the month of March. We were just north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and quite near the American tanker TEXACO OKLAHOMA, with call sign KAHM, when she broke in two and sank. She took half her crew down with her.

If you wanted to know what was taking place in the world of marine electronics you would have to ask the technicians in and around New York City. They were a wealth of information and right up to date on any news. On my next run into Staten Island, New York City, I ran into one of these technicians and asked him why I did not hear a distress call from the TEXACO OKLAHOMA. He kind of jumped back and asked me how I knew about her. I told him we were quite near her when she sank and that I had worn headphones most of that day but did not hear anything. I had bought a good pair of headphones for two reasons. One can hear much better with headphones and it was much easier to pick out various signals when the QRM – man made interference – was heavy. With headphones it eliminated all the noise from a speaker watch and the Captain's office was just around the corner from the radio room. I did not get any complaint about the noise but felt the Captain's would appreciate my headphones while sailing in the various ships I sailed in at that time.

I told this technician that the first we had heard of this accident was from the SASSTOWN with call sign 5MSJ. She was always around and always on 500 kHz it seemed at that time, and her radio officer was one of those individuals blessed with a very good radiotelegraph fist as we called it. I was on the 4 to 6 PM watch and just before I was to go down for supper I heard SASSTOWN give NMN Coast Guard Norfolk, Virginia, a vicious call on 500 kHz and a quick shift to 480 kHz. I could tell from his transmission that something was up so went up to listen to him. The first thing he rattled off was his position and the fact they were sailing in debris that appeared as though a ship had just sunk, and before he signed off he stated they had just spotted a lifeboat with people in it. I had heard Chatham Radio WCC call the TEXACO OKLAHOMA quite often that day so someone must have been wondering what had happened to her.

This technician then loosened up and told me the whole story. He said she was carrying one of their lifeboat radios belonging to the company he worked for. One of the survivors picked up by SASSTOWN had seen the radio officer walking from the mid-ship house back to the after house and was right at the split, where the OKLAHOMA had split in two. He fell down between the two sections of the ship and was lost. Those who managed to get into the lifeboat had the lifeboat radio with them. One of the mates was a big rugged lad and was in the lifeboat. He grabbed the lifeboat radio and was going to wind out a real signal so that the whole world would hear it. He had both the antenna wire and the ground wire in the water and when he grabbed the cranks to the generator he gave them such a vicious twist he broke off one of the handles.

One had to rig the antenna on these lifeboat radios to the mast in the lifeboat and then throw the ground wire over the side so that it made as much electrical contact with the earth – the salt water – as possible. With both the ground wire and antenna in the water, and with the busted generator handles, they may as well have thrown the rest of it overboard. Common sense should have told one that these lifeboat radios were designed for a crew weak from many days in a lifeboat. If this character had simply gone by the instructions in large print on the radio he would have blown the wax out of my ears, the radio officer in

SASSTOWN, my friend Tommy Potts in GYPSUM COUNTESS with call sign GHZK and many others. These lifeboat radios would transmit an automatic distress call in radiotelegraph by anyone if they took the time to do it right, simply by the instructions printed on each radio. There were always many ships in this area and the duty radioman at NMN Norfolk would have probably heard this signal from that distance. American Coast Guard radiomen were very alert and efficient. This incident was one used by the powers that be to try and speed up the design and construction of satellite communications.

The Danish Hagenuk receivers at the last VCS station were probably the best receivers I ever operated. One controlled their frequency operation from a push button panel consisting of the ten digits 1 to 0 inclusive. They would scan many frequencies. I no longer remember how many they would scan, probably thirty, but it was many more than we ever needed. One would hear a ship calling on a calling channel, merely stop the receiver on that frequency and get the ship's working frequency, and then simply punch in this frequency and one was in business. They were a beautiful piece of electronic equipment and one has to wonder whose basement holds at least one of them since the station closed. One would probably find this in the one with the thirty-foot recreational vehicle in the backyard. The Coast Guard purchased twelve thirty-foot trailers to be used as temporary living accommodation for the various Lifeboat Stations. After several years of excellent service someone managed to condemn these for safety reasons, because they had one door only. When the Coast Guard rounded them up to dispose of them they found they had eleven only. It was a great way to run a Coast Guard!

The fancy telephone described above, and the computer in its fancy rack completes the description of the high frequency radiotelegraph positions.

To give one an idea of what it was like to operate this station, I spent the evening shift of November 26th, 1989, operating the 6 and 12 megahertz radiotelegraph position for the first four hours, and then spent the last four hours on the 500 kHz position. I worked the following ships:

Call Sign	Name	Nationality	Frequency Ship Used
3EXK5	STOLT ASPIRATION	Panama	6293 kHz
3FEO2	ROSE ISLANDS	Panama	12576 kHz
YTMO	IZOLA	Yugoslavia	12604 kHz
J8EZ	KAMENARI	St. Vincent & the Grenadines	6291.7 kHz
P3DE2	ILION	Cyprus	6319 kHz
3ERR2	ANTHONY RAINBOW	Panama	6290 kHz
9HTT2	MALIBU	Malta	12591 kHz
9VXR	PROTEKTOR	Singapore	6322 kHz

I signed on at 261925UTC (3:25 PM) and I signed off with 9VXR at 5:09 PM (262109UTC). In other words I kept going steady with these ships for nearly two hours. I transmitted on the assigned frequencies 6491.5 kHz and 12874 kHz. After this burst for a Sunday evening it dropped off to two more ships.

YTCD	DANILOVGRAD	Yugoslavia	12582 kHz
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I sent him a QSL – I acknowledge receipt of your message – at 262259UTC

PJCO	NOORDAM	Netherlands Antilles	12605 kHz
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This was a Dutch passenger vessel and he wanted the score on the Gray Cup football game for 400 passengers from Toronto.

I signed off the 6 and 12 megahertz position at 270000UTC or 8:00PM AST.

3FIY2	NORCHEM	Panama	480 kHz	QSL TFC 270039UTC 8:39PM
ULNE	MALTSEVO	Russia	480 kHz	QSL TFC 270055UTC 8:55PM
DZAB	GENERAL CABAL	Philippines	480 kHz	QSL TFC 270130UTC 9:30PM
ENUO	MARSHAL GRECHKO	Russia	480 kHz	QSL TFC 270144UTC 9:44PM
ZHFJ4	GYPSY COUNTESS	Georgetown Cayman Islands	4210.6 kHz	QSL TFC 270331 UTC 11:31PM

I transmitted when working these ships, on the assigned frequency of 484 kHz and the station was assigned three transmit frequencies as described earlier, 500, 484 and 446 kHz. ZHFJ4 complained that his 480 kHz would not work so I listened for him on the four-megahertz frequency. Her main receiver was dated May 1956 and one of her transmitters was dated 1959. Her main radio station was an American Mackay MRU unit and the ship was built in 1960 so her station was thirty years old when I worked it this evening. ZHFJ4 was the old GYPSUM COUNTESS with call sign GHZK when I sailed in her. The radio officer would not tell me who he was or where he was from, but I suspect the Caribbean Islands someplace from the way he talked. His radiotelegraph fist was very good. There is absolutely nothing more beautiful than the sound of those old American transmitters built during the 1950's. The Federal Communications Commission made it mandatory that when one sent radiotelegraph on one of those transmitters that they had to key every stage of the transmitter, and that was the reason they sounded so good. They were beautiful to copy and when you transmitted on one in a ship it sounded like you were putting out a million watts. They had a transmit/receive relay that gave a loud click, with the parts of each character of your code, as it followed along with your radiotelegraph or fist.

I signed off duty this evening at 11:31 PM and went home. As one can see I was really not all that busy. We no longer worked any of the old standby or major ships of the past, such as British, American, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and so on. Those ships were using satellite communications and some of them may have carried a radio officer using this equipment, and the others did not carry a radio officer. It is impossible to find an exact division, such as the date where ships carried a radio officer or did not carry a radio officer. There was no date and there was no law that said the owner could or could not carry a radio officer. They simply faded away.

One could use any type of telegraph key that they desired from any of the operating positions in the last VCS station operations room. The old hand key, the semi-automatic key commonly called a bug, regular automatic key paddles, iambic automatic key paddles or an electronic keyboard key, and I used my own electronic keyboard key that I had designed and had DGM Electronics, Beloit, Wisconsin, build for me. For some unknown dumb reason I love to type. I had taken the standard keyboard this company manufactured and added all the "tiddly letters" and punctuation I could possibly use. This keyboard simply saved the day for me. There is no way I could have sat there and transmitted the reams of pure foolishness that ECAREG CANADA cranked out.

The other four operating positions along the west wall were more or less the same with the simple addition of this or that on each position to assist the service performed at that position. Starting south and going north there was the Training Position, 500 kHz Radiotelegraph, Medium Frequency Radiotelephone and High Frequency Radiotelephone positions. One simply turned off the various modules/receivers that one did not operate from the position they were operating. Each of these four positions had an electronic panel where one could operate the radiotelegraph key of their choice. A lot of this equipment was never used. Each of these positions had a unit that would record everything you did or heard. One could play this back to confirm something or for any reason providing this electronic marvel worked. It often would quit working just when you wanted to use it. It was a big help, or would have been, if you thought you heard something on the distress frequencies of 500 or 2182 kHz. "Big Brother" the IBM reel-to-reel tape recorder was always running and recording everything in the building, that included all the radio operating positions

and all the telephones. No one seemed to pay any attention to it and it gave the supervisor's something to do from time to time. A supervisor would take a tape and listen in on what had taken place at any given time on any of the positions. The supervisor's called this Quality Control and only they knew what that was supposed to mean.

The modules on these four positions along the west wall were using fix-tuned receivers from the equipment room in the basement. They were Spillsbury receivers from Jim Spillsbury's Company in Vancouver, British Columbia. Jim had recently purchased a portion of the Canadian Marconi Company and these receivers were part of this purchase. Jim's company was taken over by the Racal Electronic Company shortly after the station closed. The reason I knew this is that my first cousin, Cameron Finnigan was an engineer at the company at the time Racal took over. There are two excellent books available on the history of Jim and his companies called Spillsbury's Coast ISBN 0-920080-57-X and The Accidental Airline ISBN 0-920080-97-9. I often reread my copies simply for their entertaining value. He was quite a character and the books provide a few good giggles. I had run into some of his radio equipment when I was in the Yukon Territory and of course knew his airline, Queen Charlotte Airlines Limited.

There was seldom anyone at the Training Position and each channel was normally turned off. The Training Position had an additional rack on the east end that permitted the operation of the high frequency radiotelegraph positions from that position. The Training Position was the only position where one had a window to look out.

A chart table and the desk with the printer for the main computers, was against the wall separating the Supervisor's Office from the Operations Room, which was just behind the training position. The chart table had several drawers that held a good selection of charts or maps of the area. One could at least look at the map when something took place, and this would give them some idea of the area that was of interest. There were very few on the station staff that could accurately plot a position on a chart but what the hell, this was rather handy at times. The printer was used often especially when some ship made a request one could simply rattle off a printed copy for the supervisor. The duty supervisor could look at this while he phoned for the answer to whatever it was. Or when a distress incident took place one could make copies of the log entries for the supervisor who could make a file on them. It was a very handy piece of equipment and rather hard to operate the station without it.

The 500 kHz position normally operated with 500 kHz only on a speaker watch. When a ship called one selected this position in their headset, answered the ship, and then switched to the module that had the receiver and transmitter for the frequency the ship wanted to use. There was a general coverage or floating receiver on each and every operating position in the operations room, and this was necessary in order to work a ship that was unable to use the normal frequency. Normally this was selected to receive the ship on 480 kHz and so one could transmit on 484 kHz. When one did this the 500 kHz module went back to speaker watch so you could hear that frequency while you worked the ship. Another operator or the duty supervisor nearby would hear it as well. The 500 kHz position had one of the last Auto Key units from the British Marconi Company that they fitted in ships. The VCS station had sent the Distress Alarm on 500 kHz by hand from the time it was created until this unit appeared on this position. One does not want to know what this cost or why one could not continue to transmit this signal by hand and Halifax was not the only station fitted with this unit. All the stations around this coast and probably on the West Coast as well were fitted with these units.

The next position was the Medium Frequency Radiotelephone position. Noise unlimited from the 2182 kHz receiver one had to monitor continually. If the static and noise from that did not get to you a drunken fisherman would, although by the time this station opened it was getting hard to find a fisherman drunk or sober. The cell phone had entered service and the fishermen were able to make use of it. This meant more and more of the old service provided by the VCS station disappeared. This medium frequency radiotelephone position should have been installed in its own little room where all this noise did not affect the other positions of the station. When this station opened they tried placing cloth room dividers, seen in various offices around each position for privacy. These did not work at all and were nothing but a nuisance and soon disappeared.

The medium frequency position had a Radio Shack scanner. The Radio Shack scanner was the standard one anyone and everyone had around the country and would monitor the very high frequencies. This gave us an extra VHF receiver but mainly gave us a chance to listen to the frequencies we did not have, and was handy in listening to the inter-ship frequencies to see what was around.

The one thing the medium frequency position had when the station closed was the most useful item of them all. The Hughes Electronic Company built a computer operated very high frequency radio direction finder. This unit gave the position and actually plotted on a map of the area on a computer screen, the actual location of any signal it heard on the very high frequencies. This would be a big help in a distress incident and especially when the station received a false distress call. The station received a false call from time to time and I remember one where we managed to locate the transmitter in a cottage. Arresting these people would have been no problem but once they got in the courtroom the result made it a waste of time. A lot of fuel for various vessels and aircraft was wasted on these calls. A few of those who participated in this activity should have gone to prison and pounded rocks for at least five years as an example to anyone who might find it amusing.

There was a film crew at the station one time making a movie on the history of Marconi and I was operating the medium frequency radiotelephone position. We had just made a few staged shots of what it was like to handle a radiotelephone call from a foreign ship and connect it to its home office overseas when I received a distress call on very high frequency channel 16. Oh boy, this is it, and this will look really good in the movie. Bingo! Believe it or not it was a fisherman in a pickup truck that had broken down on highway 103 at exit 11. Needless to say we made sure that did not appear in the movie. These things are a big laugh in this country but I would hate to see what would happen to them in some countries. They know it in the other countries and do not do it, plain and simple.

I hope to reproduce some of my photograph collection on these pages that should help understand these positions, but unfortunately I do not have a copy of one showing this fancy radio direction finder.

I am not recording any frequencies here because they are the same frequencies we used in the old station and the ones I recorded in a description of that station. We had upgraded some of the equipment and the transmitters were either from the Nautel Company here in Nova Scotia or were from the R. F. Harris Company in up state New York. These transmitters were housed in the old transmitter building over at Pennant. These transmitters were either one or five kilowatt units. At least that is what I was told. Those who worked the station, especially on the high frequency radiotelegraph frequencies would have noticed the biggest difference, because those old Northern Electric transmitters that were replaced had a sound all their own. It was as close to dumb de dumb dumb as one could get and when at sea I often tuned in the station from the sound of the transmitter rather than actually listening to the transmission.

The high frequency position was identical to the others with the addition of an extra rack on the east or right end. This rack held the SITOR and by this time those who used it could use it fairly well and our sincerest thanks to the amateur radio community and their AMTOR. This SITOR was another computer with a printer and its own screen sitting up on the top of the equipment. We still did broadcasts on it that no one copied, but the ships that used it were now billed by time and not by word. A ship could also pull down copies of our broadcasts from our own computer system. It finally worked "Not too shabby" as Mark Chatham, one of the radio operators, would word it.

The high frequency position had the Continuous Marine Broadcast (CMB). This new CMB replaced the old one that used cassette tapes. This one was all electronic and recorded ones voice in a solid electronic circuit and was a big improvement over the old one. When we first received these units someone inquired as to the reason we had those units and not another more efficient unit that was available. We were told that it was because some member of the Coast Guard at the high management level in Ottawa played golf with the manager of the company that built the CMB. It had to be right because how could one get a more truthful answer.

All four of the positions along the west wall had a panel in front of the operator just below the computer screen. This panel kept track of and gave various pieces of information on the channels selected at that

position. In addition to this panel on the training position was another similar unit. This one monitored the power and some of the equipment and was connected to an alarm. When the alarm went off it would tell us to call the duty technician and where he was to go.

The four positions along the west wall had several speakers sitting on top of the racks like a bunch of seagulls. The reason for this was to help determine which receiver on speaker watch received what signal. These were not part of the station when it opened but the one speaker in the equipment rack made it impossible to sort the signals out. These were simply Radio Shack speakers but worked very well.

A lot of this equipment had already been removed when we all gathered to witness the transmission of the final message from the station on November 19th, 1996. Vernon Hillier was the longest serving radio operator on the station's staff and for that reason was given the opportunity to make the last and final transmission. He was an excellent choice and the only other I would have considered, besides Vern, would have been Richard Falvey. Rick, his father Ernie, his uncle, Pat, and his aunt, Marjorie, had all worked at the station at one time or another. They were the most from the one family. The last officer in charge, and they had gone back to that label was Bruce Warren. Bruce had started his career as a naval radioman. He was stationed on the West Coast and had sailed in HMCS MACKENZIE with call sign CGYZ. While Vern was making this final transmission some Coast Guard employees were boarding up the outside of the windows with plywood. They had with them a large lock and key for the two gates down by the road, although the technicians remained in the building for some months cleaning up and cleaning out.

The final message was:

CQ CQ CQ DE VCS VCS VCS = FINAL BROADCAST ON 500 KHZ. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE OVER THE YEARS. THE RADIO OPERATORS OF VCS WISH YOU A SAFE VOYAGE. 73 DE VCS +



S.G. "Spud" Roscoe VE1BC

This is Vern Hillier transmitting the final radiotelegraph message. This position was called the training position when the station was in full operation. One could operate any frequency either CW or phone from this position.



Rick Falvey VE1HA

This is another view of Vern transmitting the final radiotelegraph message.



Closing Ceremony Halifax Coast Guard Radio VCS
Ketch Harbour, Nova Scotia
November 19th, 1996

Standing Left to Right:

Cliffe Taylor (Retired R.O. VCS), Gary Comeau (Technician VCS), Joe Burgoyne (Retired R.O. VCS), Spud Roscoe VELBC (Retired R.O. VCS), Rick Falvey VELHA (Retired R.O. CG Ships), Doug Conrad VELZL (Halifax Traffic), David MacKinnon VELALO (Regional Office), Lorenzo Caterini VELLVC (Halifax Traffic), Brian Murphy (R.O. VCS), Bob Minty (Retired R.O. VCS), Ray Clements (Technician VCS), Walter Creaser (Retired R.O. VCS), Al Garnier (Technician VCS), Mike Forsythe (Supervisor VCS), Phil Vienot (Technician VCS), Kneeling Left to Right: Mark Chatham (R.O. VCS), Jim Christian VELASR (R.O. VCS), Al Simpson (Supervisor VCS), Vern Hillier (Retired R.O. VCS), Jim Best (R.O. VCS), Bruce Warren (O. I.C. VCS and Halifax Traffic), Brian Aubet (R.O. VCS), Robert Ward VELHN (R.O. VCS), Dan Dawson VELJV (Technician VCS), Gord Stoodley VELVCS (Retired R.O. VCS), Stan Cairns (Retired S.O.S. VCS), Paul Brittain (Technician VCS) and Fred Cunningham (Regional Office).

The above was typed by my old Underwood Golden Touch typewriter. The poor old thing would have been insulted if I did not have something it had done on here.

The radio officers in several ships answered this broadcast to simply wish us all the best. The final transmission received was from the large bulk/oil/ore carrier M.V. ALGARROBO with international call sign LATF4. This vessel was built in 1983 as the CAST ORCA, was 90,747 gross registered tons and 269 meters long. I was unable to find the call sign for CAST ORCA. In 1984 this vessel was renamed NORD ATLANTIC and had call sign SLBU and that meant she was registered in Sweden. In 1993 she became the

ALGARROBO and registered in Norway with the LATF4 call sign, and in 1996 was owned by the Stephanie Corporation, Sandefjord, Norway. I wrote this company on November 20th, 1996, and asked for a brief resume of the radio officer who answered Vern's transmission and all I received was a nice photograph of the ship with no letter or anything else.



Stephanie Corporation, Sandefjord, Norway

MV ALGARROBO with international call sign LATF4



S. G. "Spud" Roscoe VE1BC

This is Rick Falvey VE1HA on the left and Doug Conrad VE1ZL at the closing ceremony of the final radiotelegraph transmission from station VCS. Doug now has his first call sign VE1UY that he was assigned when in high school. Doug's wife Dorothee now has his old VE1ZL call sign. Dorothee was a ship's radio officer in German ships when she met Doug.

* * * * *

Ship to Shore Radiotelegraph
Radio Station VCS
Halifax, Nova Scotia
June 19th, 1905, to November 19th, 1996
91 years and 5 months and a very interesting 91 years and 5 months it was.
Rest in Peace Old Friend!

* * * * *

Radiotelegram Service Terminated

I received the following notice on June 12th, 2007 and the MCTS operators claim they have not handled a message in years.

Marine Communication and Traffic Services (MCTS)

Marine Communications and Traffic Services will no longer provide the radiotelegram service subject to full international charges after December 31st, 2007. However, messages addressed to “Quarantine” and messages requesting a doctor to meet a ship on arrival will now be handled without charge. MCTS will continue to provide a Marine Telephone Call Service subject to full international charges in selected areas, based upon demand and the availability of alternate service delivery methods.

MY LAST DISTRESS INCIDENT

I was working the day shift on Sunday, March 14th, 1993, and Kevin E. Layden was the supervisor. Towards the end of the day at 3:25 PM (141925UTC), Kevin and I were just getting into another flying story when I held up my hand and said “Just a second Kev”.

Kevin loved airplanes and loved to fly. He had started out building model airplanes and flying them with the local model club and after a few years of that obtained his private pilot’s licence from the local flying club. Kevin was one of those rare individuals who could build anything out of wood. His wife Linda would see something in a magazine or catalogue and would tear it out and hand it to him saying “Here, build me this Kev”. Kevin would go to the local lumber yard, get a few boards and when he finished one would swear the picture Linda had handed him was of the piece he had built. Why anyone with that talent would waste time as a government radio operator, especially a supervisor, was above and beyond the rest of us. Kevin wanted an airplane, so he built one with a Volkswagen car engine modified for aircraft. It took him five years and most of us felt that when he finished that would be the end of it. We felt he just wanted the challenge of building the plane and would not fly it and we all were wrong because he flew it regularly.



Kevin E. Layden

This is Kevin Layden with the aircraft he built C-FKEV

One of the operators on staff always stretched things beyond the limit. He claimed the current list of aircraft registered in Canada now cost eight hundred and twenty dollars. I found this rather odd because I had purchased two copies of this, years ago for one dollar each, so I wrote and asked if I could purchase one copy. I was told it was available in microfiche diazo form only. That was no problem because I had the microfiche reader for this history project, so I bought a copy for eight dollars and twenty cents. Kevin wanted to borrow this and go through it for a possible registration for his aircraft. He said he was thinking of something like C-GLPB or C-FLPB for his wife Linda, sons Paul and Barry. In the end he settled on and received registration C-FKEV.

I had worked six years in aeradio out west, so he and I spent our free time talking airplanes. When Kevin's sense of humour kicked in, and it often did, everyone was in for a good giggle. Kevin kept his airplane at the small Stanley Airport but often flew in and out of the Shearwater Military air station at Dartmouth. The world's largest aircraft at that time was called a C5 Galaxy. I knew several bush pilots that would have loved the challenge of landing Kevin's plane on the wing of a parked Galaxy. A few of them were just crazy enough to have managed the feat. One time when Kevin was taxiing out at Shearwater the Control Tower called him and wanted to know how long he would be because a Galaxy was right behind him. Kevin said he would be out of there right now and for them to make sure the Galaxy was aware of his "prop wash". It took a few minutes for one and all to regain their composure, including the crew in the Galaxy!

In April 1975, I was Radio Officer in the Canadian Coast Guard Ship TUPPER with call sign CGCV. I used to set my alarm clock each night for seven in the morning, but nearly always woke up five or ten minutes before that time. On April 4th, 1975, I woke up at ten to seven and it felt as though I were standing, because my bunk was tilted so far over it felt as though it were on its end. The TUPPER was a light icebreaker buoy vessel that did not have flume tanks to rock her back off the ice, and back down the track she had cut through the ice like the larger icebreakers. The TUPPER carried stones during the ice season and would swing these back and forth to rock her off the ice. These stones were two large cement blocks of six tons and were swung by the cargo hoist and boom used to lift the buoys. One member of her crew was called the Winchman and it was his job to operate and maintain this equipment. When he or the Bo'sun

swung these stones one could hardly feel a thing except the ship roll from side to side. When a new crewmember tried this we often had a few bumps and jolts.



K. C. "Ken" Roscoe

This is Radio Officer S. G. "Spud" Roscoe CCGS TUPPER holding son Mitchell with CCGS TUPPER in the background at her home berth. The open door below the Maple Leaf on her funnel is the door to the emergency generator room. The two windows forward of this door is the radio room. This photograph was taken in the summer of 1974 so TUPPER is not carrying her stones. They were carried just below her buff coloured cargo boom on the main cargo hatch. A helicopter could be carried on her helicopter deck on the stern. We normally carried a Bell 206B and this could be lashed to the deck and then the expanding hanger could be moved back over top of the helicopter. The sections of this hanger are all stowed forward as shown in this photograph. One can see a bit of the bow of CCGS WOLFE next to Mitchell's head.

The first thought that went through my mind when I woke up this morning was that a new man had been operating this winch, had managed to get the stones all the way out and broke the cable or cables. It looked to me as though the Winchman and Bo'sun were in for a busy day fixing the boom or hoist. After I got cleaned up and dressed, and just before I went down for breakfast, I went out on the bridge to see what was going on.

The TUPPER had the bridge across the front of her only superstructure as in all ships. Just behind the bridge on the port side was the radio room and behind the radio room was the emergency generator room. One entered the emergency generator room from outside. This room had a Cummins diesel generator and also had the emergency batteries for the main radio station. The chart room was just behind the bridge on the starboard side, then my living quarters or cabin, the Captain's office and his living quarters combined. A companionway or hallway ran from the door to the bridge down between these rooms to a ladder that went down to the deck below.

3rd Officer, the Coast Guard terminology for the 3rd Mate, was John Saunders, and he was the duty officer of the watch. When I stepped into the bridge I could see the stones down on the buoy deck stowed and secure in their normal position when not in use. We were stopped in the ice with the main movers or main engines shut down. I said to John "What in hell is going on John"? He said, "It's the wind. It is blowing over 70 miles per hour and is holding us over". That was a new experience for me and with that I went down for breakfast.

When I came back up on watch a few minutes before 8 AM and fired up the old Marconi Atalanta receiver I was to learn a ship was in trouble down off Halifax. We were in the Gulf of St. Lawrence off the East Coast of New Brunswick. The self-discharging ore carrier COLON BROWN with call sign A8CX had left Halifax bound for Baltimore. She had on board one of the National Gypsum Company officials and when she hit this weather outside Halifax Harbour it was a bit much for this official. He ordered the Captain to turn around and take him back to Halifax. The storm was so severe the COLON BROWN was blown ashore on Maugher's Beach as the Captain got her turned and was trying to get back into the harbour. He probably knew this move was a bit risky, but he would have been fired on arrival Baltimore if he had continued on, so he had no choice.

The first of these self-discharging ore carriers were the two built by Kearney Ship Yard, Kearney, New Jersey, in 1947 for the United States Gypsum Company and the rest were copies of these two, at least the idea, theory, whatever the terminology came from these two. These two were SS GYPSUM QUEEN and SS GYPSUM PRINCE. National Gypsum, Reynolds Aluminum, Georgia Pacific, and probably a few others all had copies of these ships.



Captain Oscar Langdon

This is the SS GYPSUM QUEEN one of the first two self-discharging ore carriers built at Kearney, New Jersey, in 1947. Unfortunately her stern door for the crossover belt cannot be seen in this photograph.

If one cut one of these ships in two and looked at the end of each section it would look something like the letter W and the two V parts making up the W were the cargo holds. The inverted V between the two holds was the water ballast, fuel and freshwater tanks. At the bottom of the cargo holds were gates and over two hundred of them. One hundred and twenty one I believe on each side. These gates opened and let the cargo pour out onto an endless conveyor belt. There were two of these belts of course, and they ran beyond the full length of the cargo holds. The United States Gypsum ships carried two men called Gatemen and it was their job to operate and maintain these gates. The two endless conveyor belts ran up at the stern of the ship past the main engines or engine room. These two belts emptied into another belt called the cross over belt. In the United States Gypsum ships this cross over belt could move from one side of the ship to the other and would protrude out past the ship's side, through a door in the ship's side. There was a door on each side of the ship, in the ship's hull for this purpose. This cross over belt emptied into the belt ashore that took the

ore up into a storage area, after it got rid of the empty booze bottles that rattled up the belt on a few occasions and were first ashore. There was a walkway between the bottom of the cargo holds and the outside hull of the ships known as the tunnel. There was one tunnel on each side of the ship, of course, and this was where the Gatemen operated the gates and the only time the rest of us went down there was when the weather would not permit us to walk across the upper deck from the foreward to the afterhouse. The Captain, Mates, Radio Officer and Seamen lived at the foreward end of the ship. We used to go down inside the foreward house, along the tunnel and up into the afterhouse for our meals. The tunnel was a great place to hide with a bottle because the ships were supposed to be booze free or dry.

Some of the United States Gypsum ships carried an extra belt that could be hung off the side of the ship, and the cross over belt would empty into this extension. This extension belt would empty the cargo in a pile ashore making the ship a true self-discharge vessel. It would take a bulldozer or two ashore to clear the cargo away from this extension belt or the ship would have to move up or down her dock while discharging.

For some unknown reason the naval architect that designed National Gypsum's ships did not place the cross over belt in the same place as those in the United States Gypsum ships. He ran the cross over belt in a fairly large house built behind the main superstructure of the ship. This was probably designed to assist discharging her cargo ashore some place. This large house acted like a huge sail on COLON BROWN and this caused her to loose control and go ashore in this storm. A merchant ship has enough power to push her through the water of the open sea only. She does not have sufficient power to correct for anything out of the ordinary. This was the reason we needed as many as four tugs to assist in our docking at some ports.

After the authorities had a chance to inspect COLON BROWN she was declared a constructive total loss, meaning it was up to the insurance companies to do with her what they may. In the end she was taken to Japan and made into two ships: the GOLD BOND CONVEYOR and the GOLD BOND TRAILBLAZER. "The CONVEYOR" had the COLON BROWN's stern section with the superstructure so kept the A8CX call sign. The bow or foreward section went to "the TRAILBLAZER" and she was assigned call sign D5BW. These two ships then went to work on the same route as the COLON BROWN and we often worked them both. Every time I heard the A8CX call sign I thought of my experience with the wind in the TUPPER.



Ship to Shore Photography, Whites Lake, Nova Scotia

This is the GOLD BOND TRAILBLAZER passing under the A. Murray MacKay Bridge, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Note the large house housing the cross over belt behind the main superstructure. GOLD BOND CONVEYOR and GOLD BOND TRAILBLAZER were identical sisters. Also note the flags she is flying. She is flying the Liberian flag on her stern out of sight. The Canadian flag on her main mast because she is in Canadian waters. She is also flying letter H on the main mast and that signifies she has a licensed Canadian pilot on board.

When I held-up my hand and asked Kevin to wait on Sunday, March 14th, 1993, I could hear three or four signals on 500 kHz. Years before this it did not seem to matter how many signals were on 500 kHz, one could make out what each was transmitting because of the many harmonics, and many were not right on 500 kHz. The last of these shipboard transmitters were hard to work. Every one of them sounded the same and right bang on frequency. It was so bad by February 22nd, 1985 when I had two ships calling but had one heck of a time in sorting them out. I had the GEORGIA S with call sign H9RP and the YIANNIS L with call sign H9RW. A W in radiotelegraph was simply a P minus the last dot. One could often tell the make of the old transmitters before the ship identified.

The most severe QRM (man made interference) I ran into was in the English Channel in 1962. I felt Land's End, GLD, would not hear me when I called him, but no problem, he came right back to me over top of all that QRM. This QRM was so severe that one had the feeling they could get off and walk on it. The reason we in the ships had no trouble hearing GLD, I am told, is because his 5-kW transmitter was on 499-kHz and was modulated with a 400-Hz audio signal. Our receivers would hear a 200-Hz tone owing to the BFO oscillator that was normally tuned to hear an 800-Hz tone for a signal on 500-kHz. GLD always transmitted MCW or modulated continuous wave on 500-kHz. It was a great signal and a great station to work. The operators at GLD were the ones with the disadvantage. They had to pull our low power signal out of all that QRM.

What I thought I heard when I asked Kevin to wait was a ship calling another ship with a PA prefix in the call sign. The PA prefix meant the ship was a Dutch warship, and the operator that had last used radiotelegraph in a Dutch warship was long gone. Once I concentrated and managed to realize what was going on, this is what I heard:

PAN PAN PAN SHIP GOLD BOND CONVEYOR/A8CX 12 DEGREE LIST POSTION ... COURSE ...
SPEED 1.5 KNOTS K

PAN was the radiotelephone call for the radiotelegraph XXX emergency signal. The reason it was XXX was so the sound transmitted in radiotelegraph would attract our attention, and this was identical to so many signals, including the SOS. My first thoughts were "Good God, has this trade gone to hell!" and then I was back mentally leaning over in the wind on the TUPPER. As soon as the radio officer in A8CX signed with the letter K (the invitation to transmit) I cleared everyone off 500 kHz with the proper XXX signal. I sent QRT (Stop transmitting) XXX. Then I sent XXX XXX A8CX A8CX DE VCS VCS RR QSL (I acknowledge receipt of your transmission) K. I did not receive a reply to my transmission so I called XXX XXX A8CX A8CX DE VCS VCS K but did not receive a reply. I started to copy these signals on a scratch pad and Kevin gave me a lined legal white pad for this. He also grabbed a telephone and had RCC, the Rescue Coordination Centre in the Dockyard alerted.

It looked real serious and RCC wanted us to do every thing possible to get A8CX to transmit the SOS signal because this would make it official, and then we could divert everything in the area to assist if possible. They could cancel the SOS signal if they were able to rectify the situation and carry on to their destination. I just had time to record what I had copied into a Casualty Message Form on the computer, and send it, when Don Dupuis came in and relieved me, taking over for the evening shift. I brought Don up to date and went home. Don continued the request for SOS but did not get one.

In the meantime an Aurora aircraft, the Canadian version of the P3 Orion, went out to keep an eye on GOLD BOND CONVEYOR. The Aurora was under the command of (29 year old) Captain Al Wongkee from Brockville, Ontario. The Bermuda ship HAVKONG, with call sign VSBN7, proceeded to the area and

was there when the Aurora watched, with an ultra-violet video camera, the GOLD BOND CONVEYOR roll over and sink at 12:31 AM on March 15th, 1993, and neither HAVKONG or the Aurora saw anyone leave the ship.

The only crewmember found at the scene was the body of the radio officer at 8:14 AM that morning, and was recovered by search and rescue technician Cpl. David Knubley. He did this dangling on a line from a Labrador helicopter in four to five metre seas. The radio officer was wearing runners, jeans and a life jacket only, in seas with a temperature of 9C. One has to wonder when the radio officer left the ship. You hear complaints of racism and apparently racism in China was as bad as it gets. There were 33 crewmembers in GOLD BOND CONVEYOR; 29 from Hong Kong, 3 from main land China, and this radio officer from Taiwan. Was this an incident of racism? We will never know but we were the ones insisting on the SOS signal not him.

The only other body recovered washed up on a beach in Ireland, in a survival suit, many months after the accident. Looking into that survival suit must have been a most unpleasant task. We were told there were twelve survival suits on board so we were hoping we would have twelve survivors at least. After the accident the owners of GOLD BOND CONVEYOR admitted there were six survival suits on board, and they found one floating around among the debris while trying to find survivors. There were 33 crewmembers on board for these six survival suits. One wonders which six crewmembers were to have a suit. The last radio message from the ship was at 12:23 AM when Captain Man Hoi Chan told Al Wongkee they were leaving the ship via VHF radiotelephone. He had told Captain Wongkee that one of the holds had been leaking, which caused the list, and that he had tried to correct for this with water ballast.

There were two hard covered lifeboats and four life rafts on board. The stern of one lifeboat and the two life rafts were found among the rest of the debris. One life raft was inflated and the other partially inflated.

There were many who wondered why Captain Chan, who had been in command of GOLD BOND CONVEYOR for many years, sailed on Saturday afternoon March 13th, 1993. He had left Halifax with 24,000 tons of gypsum ore for Tampa, Florida. She made thirty to forty trips each year with gypsum ore, and that was the only cargo she ever carried. This was another bad March storm that had been well advertised with seas running to 20 metres and southwest winds of 60 knots. Three ships refused to sail from Halifax in this storm. The ZIM ITALIA, with call sign 4XGT, the ZIM SAVANNA, with call sign 4XIL and the ASL SANDERLING with call sign VOLG. Don Archibald was in command of "the SANDERLING" and had watched Captain Chan take "the CONVEYOR" out at the same time he was supposed to sail. Don and I had sailed together in GYPSUM COUNTESS some years before this, and his brother was the principal of one of the schools my sons attended. The owners of the drill rig ROWAN GORILLA III, with call sign KSCP, had removed all non-essential personnel, and had jacked the rig up 21 metres to avoid the high seas off Sable Island.

This storm was called the storm of the century, at the time, and it seems each of these March storms is given this label by the news media. The ice from this storm kept the ferries in Halifax Harbour at their dock, and extra buses were put in service across the bridges to replace this temporary loss of the ferries.

51 family members, all from Hong Kong, flew in to Yarmouth on Thursday, March 25th, 1993, and held a Buddhist memorial service at Kelleys Cove, down near Chebogue Point off Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, on Friday March 26th, 1993. After this service these family members had a meeting with various officials. Their main interest was this storm during this meeting.

Unfortunately we had no destroyer with a couple of large helicopters to lift this crew off like we had with the MAURICE DESGAGNES. I feel confident my natural curiosity and knowledge of the various call signs made it possible for me to catch the first transmission, even though it was more or less a hopeless call. Would there have been any change in the outcome if a proper SOS signal had been transmitted at the beginning? We will never know but I honestly feel it would have made little difference in the outcome. The sea that day was as bad as the one that claimed the RAIFUKU MARU, MAURICE DESGAGNES and too many other vessels that have met the same fate in this area. It was just one of those unfortunate things that unfortunately happen from time to time.

A FINAL NOTE

When I retired I wanted to go back to sea but that was impossible. It would have been a lot of fun to circumnavigate the world each year in a 3500-ton freighter. It would take about six months and then one could have the other six months off. Like I say, this was impossible because there were no 3500-ton freighters. They disappeared before radiotelegraph and everything was changed to bulk or container in large ships. The cargo for these large ships was trucked many miles, if necessary, to a port that could handle these large vessels. If one could have found a ship they would have had to take their amateur radio station in order to have someone to talk to. All the coastal radio stations were QRT – had stopped transmitting and were closed.

It is not over until it is over but it was definitely over. These stations were not a common radio station they were very special and the reason for the title to this effort “Radio Station’s Common? Not This Kind”.

I trust this project has been of some interest. I certainly enjoy putting it together.

Spurgeon G. Roscoe
First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108
Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054
Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

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